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# **Affect, Coalitional Politics, and Pride: Imagining Activism through Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners and the United Kingdom Miners' Strike of 1984-5**

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## **Abstract**

The United Kingdom Miners' Strike began on 6 March 1984 as a response to the closure of five pits without adequate review, as well as Margaret Thatcher's unwillingness to reach any compromise. The almost year long strike ended without victory and is known as one of the bitterest industrial disputes in UK history. Thatcher's motives for closing the pits were to grow the economy by importing coal, oil, and gas, as well as cut back on inefficient pits within the United Kingdom. At the height of the strike, 142,000 miners were active in the movement and faced harassment by police, officials, and the general public as a result. To support the miners, many activist groups formed to aid in strike efforts, one of these groups being Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners, a London-based activist group who formed a relationship with the mining community in Wales' Dulais Valley.

This thesis analyzes of the relationship between LGSM and the Dulais Valley Miners as well as the 2014 BBC film *Pride's* take on the coalition as an affectively driven bond, positing that their coalition provides a space to imagine future productive activism and radical social movement politics. This project looks into the coalition between LGSM and the Dulais Valley mining community to offer an example of productive activism between unlikely allies, as well as providing a case study from which to imagine political activism and constructive coalition building in the future. Through analyzing the discourse between the two groups, this thesis enters into a discussion about the circumstances under which coalitions such as LGSM's has the potential to form. This thesis specifically draws upon affect theory, social movement rhetoric, and theories of queer coalitions to discuss the impacts of these affective moments upon both the miners' and LGBTQ rights in the United Kingdom.

Affect, Coalitional Politics, and *Pride*: Imagining Activism through Lesbians and  
Gays Support the Miners and the United Kingdom Miners' Strike of 1984-5

by

Carla E. Gaynor

B.A. Hobart & William Smith Colleges, 2014

Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in  
Communication & Rhetorical Studies

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## Introduction

### Affect & Activism through the 1984-5 UK Miners' Strike

**Mark:** And we've got a name: LGSM. Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners.

**Steph:** It's not very catchy.

**Mark:** It's a support group, Steph, not a skiffle band.

I sit in a theater in Norwich, England in the spring of 2014 watching *Pride* with my housemates for the first time. I find myself laughing, crying, and worrying along with the characters in the film. There's something that draws me into the characters' lives and makes me feel invested in their outcome. This memory sits with me still as I navigate through this project. The truth is, before *Pride* I hadn't heard of the United Kingdom Miners' Strike of 1984-5, which is often referred to as Margaret Thatcher's greatest victory.

After more than a year living in England and being involved with multiple LGBTQ+ student and activist groups, I hadn't before heard of Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners (LGSM) though their discourse with the National Union of Mineworkers still influences LGBTQ inclusive politics in the United Kingdom. I was living in Norwich, England on 8 April 2013—the date of Margaret Thatcher's death. Thatcher, who at the time of the strike was Leader of the Conservative Party in the United Kingdom, is often dubbed the “Iron Lady” due to her conservative, anti-labour, and uncompromising politics that later became known as Thatcherism. Thatcherism is often associated with a resurgence of support for the market economy, a mistrust of state, and a rejection of collectivism in favor of capitalism. I vividly recall the parade that overtook campus and rushed through the streets of Norwich's city centre on that day. Norwich is a liberal arts and university city and Thatcher found few supporters dwelling within the city's medieval walls. I was also living in Norwich upon the release of the British film, *Pride*, in

September of 2014. The film, regarded for its historical accuracy in relaying the captivating story of the coalition between LGSM and the Dulais Valley mining community of South Wales, stayed with me a while past my first viewing experience. My long interest in the story between LGSM and the Dulais Valley miners leads me to this project.

The United Kingdom Miners' Strike began on 6 March 1984 as a response to the closure of five pits without adequate review in March of 1984 as well as Margaret Thatcher's unwillingness to reach any compromise. The almost year long strike ended without victory and is known as one of the bitterest industrial disputes in UK history (Kelliher). Thatcher's motives for closing the pits were to grow the economy by importing coal, oil, and gas, as well as cut back on inefficient pits within the United Kingdom. At the height of the strike, 142,000 miners were active in the movement and faced harassment by police, officials, and the general public as a result.

### **The 1984-5 Miners' Strike: Motivations for Political Action under Margaret Thatcher**

There are a few noted causes of the pit closures that led to the beginning of the strike in 1984. Included is the declining overall coal market, falling sales to electricity, and the use of alternative coal supplies that displaced the need for deep mined coal from within the United Kingdom (Glyn & Machin 1999). However, the biggest cause of the pit closures was Thatcher's decision to increasingly import coal, taking revenue away from coal fields within the country. On the buildup to the 1984 strike Kelliher notes that the National Union of Mineworkers had been on strike twice before, once in 1972 and again in 1974. Although these earlier strikes were shorter lived than the 1984 strike, they were equally unsuccessful in their ability to have their demands met. Kelliher writes, "By 1984 the labour movement was in retreat, with union

membership in decline for the first time in half a century and an aggressively anti-union Conservative government having won a second general election” (244). The movement quickly realized the greater length and breadth of the 1984-5 strike and funds were a central concern with union funds being rapidly seized by the courts.

The marginalization and oppression of certain groups under the rule of Margaret Thatcher increasingly brought labour politics and social issues together. Peter Ackers writes,

For a time, the early 1980s looked like the 1930s, with the mainstream reformist left defeated and out of power, and a vibrant radical opposition taking its place. Thatcher and Reagan and the spectre of nuclear annihilation stood in for the threat of Fascism. All this produced a period of left- wing solidarity and sectarianism, linked to furious debates over socialist strategy. (152)

The Left-wing solidarity Ackers discusses refers to the attempt by the National Union of Mineworkers to encourage alliance building across Left political beliefs in order to defeat Thatcherism.

In addition, Stuart Hall and Martin Jacques in *Politics of Thatcherism* argue that Thatcherism was representative of a historic political defeat for the Left, caused by an authoritarian populist Right which “had exploited the contradictions of British Labourism and social democracy” (154). Meaning, there would fail to be a quick return to power for the Labour left, as they had lost their central role in United Kingdom politics. The mid 1980s saw a drive to defeat and replace Thatcherism through a broad democratic alliance rather than a rapid movement toward socialism (Ackers). Although the strike as a whole was attempting to form

alliances across the Left, LGSM was specifically comprised of young socialists living in London, who formed the coalition with the Dulais Valley Miners based originally on similar political views. It is important to note that this was not the case across the entirety of the strike efforts, as attempts to gain support against Thatcher required alliance building on a broadly democratic scale.

Ackers uses theories by Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist theorist and politician to discuss the intertwining of political and social issues in the Miners' Strike. Ackers contends that a specifically Gramscian take on the strike “drew a clear link between the ‘vested interest’ of certain groups of workers and the ‘sword of honour’ that the labor movement carried for the overwhelming majority of the working population” (155). Under a Gramscian perspective, “a strike that challenged the Thatcherite state and ignored public opinion could not hope to win” (155). Gramsci theorized cultural hegemony, or the domination of a diverse society by the ruling class to the point that the ruling class’s worldview becomes the status quo. To combat this, Gramsci posited what a “complete revolution” could be. Walter L. Adamson in *Hegemony and Revolution* writes, “The hegemonic level represents the advance to a ‘class consciousness’ where class is understood not only economically but also in terms of a common intellectual and moral awareness, a common culture” (171). In addition, Gramsci believed that a “complete revolution” could not be achieved unless it brought together a “single economic, political, and cultural conception of the world” (171). In regards to the 1984-5 Miners’ Strike, it could not hope to be successful without a unified economic, cultural, and political front. To do this, the interests of groups had to be taken into consideration for a unified fight against Thatcher and the Tory government.

On the importance of a unified front during the strike, South Wales NUM leader, Arfon Evans states, “But we realise that the miners, indeed no section of workers can take this Government alone. We need to develop the broadest alliance of all forces in support of our demands and alternatives for the industry. This means uniting all trade unions and communities in action to develop a thriving coal industry (Ackers 156). Ackers also argues that the miners’ strikes of 1972 and 1974 served as an example of how the effort cannot be won on picketing alone. In addition, “The main lesson of the strike is that it can only be won by moving on three fronts: unity among the miners; maximum support from other workers; and ‘the widest possible public support and sympathy’” (Ackers 160).

### **LGSM from Conception Through the Strike’s End**

LGSM is often placed in the lineage of the Gay Liberation Front (GLF), a radical group in the early 1970s. (Kelliher). LGSM rose specifically from lesbian and gay activism in the Labour movement, and was comprised of a group of young socialists. Kelliher notes, “It was a Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights (LCLGR) meeting with a striking miner after the 1984 Lesbian and Gay Pride march in London that gave the direct impetus to start a solidarity group” (246). Ashton himself was an openly gay activist in the traditional Left, and was a member of the Young Communist League. By 1984, the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) had adopted gay rights as part of its civil rights and liberties platform, and LGSM adopted a communist approach to campaigning (Smith & Leeworthy 622). Smith & Leeworthy also state that, “Communists had long spoken about oppression of and liberation for workers, and about the need for complete structural change of the capitalist system” (623). Young communist influence was central to the creation of LGSM and shaping the activism the group engaged in.



The first meeting of LGSM consisted of Labour and Communist Party members entirely, and LGSM operated along the dividing lines of class, similar to the ideology of the mining communities of South Wales. (Leeworthy). Though LGSM and GLF have often been considered similar, Kelliher writes that, “LGSM built stronger relationships with the trade-union movement partly because the nature of the strike allowed it, coupled with the growing integration of lesbian and gay rights into the trade-union movement and the left in general since the GLF. However, it was also important that in contrast to some sections of GLF—LGSM sought to highlight the common interests of the miners and of lesbian and gay people” (Kelliher 248). LGSM was founded July of 1984, though collections had been ongoing since the 1984 London Pride that June (“Our Story”).

LGSM was originally founded by Ashton and Mike Jackson, who remained key figures in the coalition beyond the strike’s end. Citing mutual marginality and Thatcher as a common enemy, Ashton and Jackson recruited a small group of members who collectively sought out a Welsh mining community to support. LGSM formed a coalition with the Dulais Valley mining community due to their original willingness to accept the group’s donation via phone call. As a response to the original funds donated from the 1984 pride march, LGSM was invited to the Dulais Valley mining community in Wales to thank them for their support. This visit was the first of many interactions and affective experiences between the two groups. On the impact of LGSM, Daryl Leeworthy writes,

Thousands of miners and their families, and the wider community that supported them, endured bitter hardship and all-too-real poverty in an effort to keep their jobs and maintain an industry that for generations had been the principal employer

in the region. The miners' strike might fairly be portrayed as a final expression of twentieth century politics with class as the organising principle of social and political activity: the 1980s more generally, the era of Thatcherite politics and sexual nervousness surrounding the AIDS crisis seemed to be a time when alternative identities began to over- take class as traditional social boundaries broke down. (260)

In addition, Leeworthy claims that the coalition between LGSM and the National Union of Mineworkers provides a clear example of class-based radical activism that had begun to see a decline by the mid 1980s in the United Kingdom. While accounts of the coalition are often practically explained as class-based, *Pride* shows the relationship through a series of building, affective experiences during the year-long strike.

*Pride* showcases these affective experiences in detail, reenacting and reimagining them almost thirty years after the strike's end. Prior to *Pride*'s release, little was mentioned about the relationship between LGSM and the Dulais Valley miners. The film's release sparked a resurgence of conversation surrounding the coalition and prompted a small amount of discussion within the academy as some history scholars began to turn to LGSM and the Dulais Valley miners as a case study. However, little has been mentioned in relation to the impact this coalition had on politics in the United Kingdom, and opportunities to examine this as a site of future radical political activism have not yet been taken up.

This thesis centers on the story of LGSM and interrogates their relationship with the Dulais Valley Mining community with a queer lens. I do not revisit Welsh mining communities post-strike, and instead focus on the social change regarding LGBT politics in England from

LGSM's coalition with the miners.<sup>1</sup> This is not to ignore the bitter failure of the 1984-5 United Kingdom Mines' Strike and the harsh social and economic hardships faced by mineworkers, but to rather make an intervention in the importance of affective coalition building, using LGSM as a case study.

Through my analysis of the relationship between LGSM and the Dulais Valley Miners as well as the film's 2014 take on the coalition as an affectively driven bond, I posit that their coalition provides a space to imagine future productive activism and radical social movement politics. Looking into the coalition between LGSM and the Dulais Valley mining community offers an example of productive activism between unlikely allies, as well as providing a case study from which to imagine political activism and constructive coalition building in the future. Analyzing the discourse between the two groups opens a discussion about the circumstances under which bonds such as this have the potential to form. I specifically draw upon affect theory, social movement rhetoric, and theories of queer coalitions throughout my thesis to discuss the impacts of these affective moments upon both the miners' and LGBTQ rights in the United Kingdom. In addition, I look to *Pride* as a point of analysis through which to view the re-creation and deployment of affective experiences, and their inherent significance to productive coalition building. I look at the hindrances and affordances of the re-creation of social movement history through popular film, analyzing the ways in which *Pride* reimagines and invokes the coalition as an entranceway for LGSM into current activist discourse.

The original basis of LGSM and the miners' alliance was their mutual marginality and the discrimination that they both faced under the rule of Margaret Thatcher. It has been noted

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on mining in Wales see *Mining the Meaning: Cultural Representations of the 1984-5 UK Miners' Strike* by Katy Shaw and *The South Wales Miners 1964-1985* by Ben Curtis.

that, “LGSM therefore saw common ground in a strike that is not even about pay and conditions, but rather about jobs and communities, about a way of life. However, it was the allegedly sexist, patriarchal and anti-gay nature of the mining communities that some used to attack LGSM” (Kelliher 240). In the United Kingdom during the 1980’s, homophobia was wide-spread and the group’s public position as gay hindered many alliances from forming originally; however, attitudes began to change as LGSM donated funds and routinely visited the community throughout the duration of the strike. Ashton, a member of a young socialist group in London, is recorded leveraging LGSM’s coalition with the miners specifically in regards to both groups’ opposition to the dominant, ruling class. In her book *Sexuality and Socialism*, Sherry Wolf writes,

Homophobic, sexist, racist, nationalist, and other divisions in modern society reflect the interests of the dominant class in society. This class—the ruling class—constitutes a small minority of the population; it therefore must use the institutional and ideological tools at its disposal to divide the mass of the population against itself in order to prevent the majority from uniting and rising in unison to take back what is rightfully theirs. (10)

Ashton saw the potential to unite with the National Union of Mineworkers to form a strong coalition in the fight against Thatcherism. After many calls and attempts to donate funds to the miners, the Dulais Valley mining community welcomed LGSM to their town. At first, many members of LGSM were reluctant to support the miners, a historically homophobic group; likewise, the Dulais Valley miners were reluctant to accept support from the group of lesbians and gay men. Colin Clews, a member of LGSM recounts,

Of course it wasn't just the police who abused us – we got that from our own 'community' as well. I can't remember getting any stick from lesbians but I certainly remembered a few queens who either felt we were being naive in supporting working class homophobes or who simply looked down on working class people in general. (Clews)

Though LGSM and the Dulais Valley Miners were not prior allies, their oppression under the rule of Thatcher and by the press, police, and public provided an impetus from which their coalition had the ability to form. Sparking the coalition, their collective opposition to and fight against the ruling class gave room for emotionally charged and collective experiences to form a socially and politically radical group.

Lesbians and gay men faced much harassment prior to and during the strike and specifically under the Tory government which provided an impetus for their relationship with the mining community. 1984 saw the beginning of the AIDS epidemic in the United Kingdom, with LGSM member Jonathan Blake being one of the first diagnosed with HIV in the United Kingdom in 1982. (Lobb). In addition, when collecting money for the miners, members were met with both verbal and physical harassment akin to the abuse lesbians and gay men faced from police and other government officials. In a 2015 interview with *Big Issue*, Jonathan Blake writes, "For us, as gay men and lesbians, we understood the way the state could attack and oppress you. They were continually harassing gay men in any way they could. So in a way we were natural allies with the miners" (Lobb)

Kelliher speaks on the group's relationship with the mining community. He writes, "With NUM bank accounts frozen during the 1984-5 strike, it was not possible to donate directly to the union. This reinforced the popular practice of 'twinning' between support groups and particular

mining communities of pits” (244). By ‘twinning’, Kelliher refers to the act of support groups pairing and forming a coalition with a specific mining community, instead of supporting the miners through the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM). In addition, LGSM was able to pay a quarter of the miners’ weekly bills during the strike, raising twenty thousand pounds from street collections, raffles, and events such as the “Pits and Perverts” fundraiser gig, which collected over five thousand pounds on its own (Kelliher 242). LGSM also received funds to help cover costs of frequent travel between London and Wales.

Though the strike ended on 3 March 1986 without victory, in the wake of the strike the Labour Party voted to support LGBT rights during their 1985 Conference in Bournemouth. This was due to a unanimous affirmative vote by the NUM. It is this glimmer of social change, as well as the unlikely coalition between LGSM and the Dulais Valley miners amidst the devastating failure of the 1984 Miners’ Strike, that is the focal point of this project.

## **Theory**

Overarching theoretical approaches that I use for this project include coalitional politics, social movement rhetoric, and affect theory. Laced throughout both chapters, I trace the ways in which coalitions are inherently affective, and use this to build upon the position that affect in social movements has the potential to produce productive radical activism, as seen through the case study of LGSM and the mining community of the Dulais Valley. Though each of these theoretical approaches are at the forefront of both chapters, I privilege them differently to discuss first the nature of the coalition between LGSM and the miners, and second provide a reception analysis of *Pride* in which I analyze the film’s cinematic success through the film’s framing as well as audience perception of the story’s authenticity. I study the film’s framing and perceived

authenticity through the recreation of affective interactions and how this bond can be explored as a site to explore future radical political activism and coalition building.

I draw upon affect theory, coalitional politics, and rhetoric of social movements to help explain and analyze the coalition between LGSM and the miners from a perspective that simultaneously accounts for the intersectional nature of the relationship, while also affirming and exploring its affective state. The specific artifacts I draw from include a 1985 Documentary created by members of LGSM directly following the strike, titled “All Out!: Dancing in Dulais,” which was uploaded to YouTube in 2012; interviews from pamphlets and publications from the years surrounding the strike; posts by LGSM on their authenticated Twitter account, and archival materials such as newspaper clippings and posters from the Labour Union Archives in the Manchester Peoples’ History Museum that have been uploaded to the museum’s website. For my second chapter, I use the 2014 film, *Pride*, as an object of analysis from which to analyze the discourse surrounding LGSM’s coalition with the miners thirty years after its end. Using these artifacts that draw upon, explain, and perform the emotionally charged moments of intensity that occurred throughout the strike, I look at the ways in which this coalition is depicted, reimagined, received, and retold.

### *Social Movement Rhetoric*

Social Movements, defined by Jeff Goodwin and James Jasper, are “conscious, concerted, and sustained efforts by ordinary people to change some aspect of their society by using extra-institutional means” (3). Historically, social movements have been studied from a sociological and rhetorical perspective, with language and method differing more drastically beginning around 1980 (Foust). Charles Morris and Stephen Browne write, “to study the rhetoric

of social protest is to study how symbols—words, signs, images, music, bodies—operate to shape our perceptions of reality and invite us to act accordingly. Moreover, contemporary scholarship has also suggested how nonlinguistic and nonsymbolic presences and absences contribute to material conditions and lived experience” (1). It is here that I find the potential for coalition building and affect to help propel social movement.

Scholars of social movements have employed and theorized a wide range of methods in studying social movements. Leland Griffin discusses social movements as having a beginning, progression, and termination. Therefore, “the rhetorical component of the movement is dynamic, and has its inception, its development, and its consummation” (Griffin 10). Robert L. Scott and Donald K. Smith describe the confrontation of social movements in terms of radical and revolutionary circumstances. They write, “radical confrontation reflects a dramatic sense of division. The old language of the ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’ scarcely indicates the basis of the division, nor its depth” (Scott and Smith 27). This speaks to both the confrontation of the miners against Thatcherism, as well as the division between LGSM and the Dulais Valley Miners prior to coalition building. Robert Cathcart also discusses the rhetoric of confrontation, arguing that “confrontation serves, also, to identify the membership of the movement. Movements are rag-tag organizations at best, continually plagued by problems of organization, recruitment and mobilization. Acts of confrontation demand a personal commitment beyond simply agreeing with the goals of the movement or recognizing that there are wrongs to be righted (Cathcart 83). By forming a coalition with the Dulais Valley miners, LGSM confronted many social issues and stigmas beyond the wrongs of the strike, forming the ability to create social change beyond of the focus of the Miners’ Strike.



Looking at the Miners' Strike through the lens of social movement rhetoric provides a point from which to situate the movement and creates a way to analyze the strike's failure in contrast to LGSM and the Dulais Valley Miners' coalition. While the Miners' Strike as a whole falls under historically grounded theories on social movement rhetoric, analyzing the coalition between LGSM and the miners finds roots in more recent theories on social movements. I note that while the strike was a failure, certain "successes" evolve out of the coalition between LGSM and the Dulais Valley Miners. In order to analyze this relationship, I turn to social movement literature largely written post 1980 that specifically discusses affect and coalition building.

Christina Foust, in her article, "'Social Movement Rhetoric': A Critical Genealogy, post 1980" describes the withering of social movement rhetoric and the expansion of counterpublic theory in recent years. Foust marks a recent trend in social movement scholarship which she calls nomadic work due to its tendency to branch out in a variety of directions and include applications that do not exclusively rely on discursive communication. Foust writes, "Nomadic work has productively expanded 'rhetorics of social resistance,' legitimating a range of texts, identities, and tactics against the universalizing tendencies of functional theory" (in press). Foust is critical of this new trend in social movement scholarship, arguing that it misses rhetoric's potential to move the social (in press). However, Foust does note that "Nomadic work has productively expanded 'rhetorics of social resistance,' legitimating a range of texts, identities, and tactics against the universalizing tendencies of functional theory" (in press). I posit that nomadic work, especially that which includes affect theory and theories on coalition building, provides a productive lens through which to view LGSM and the miners' alliance.

Writing about affect and social movements specifically, Deborah Gould, in *Moving Politics: Emotion and ACT UP's Fight against AIDS*, discusses why scholars of social

movements had previously been hesitant to incorporate emotion into their research. Generally regarded as irrational, scholars ignored affect to avoid claims that social movements and activism were void of reason and meaning making. However, Gould contends,

Rather than being a force that interferes with reason that should therefore be sequestered from the public, political realm, emotion here is viewed as a crucial means by which human beings come to know and understand themselves and their contexts, their interests and commitments, their needs and their options in securing those needs. (17)

Therefore, affect in social movements should not negate rationality, but rather engage the basis for what drives political activism. Gould affirms,

A specific focus on affect, then, opens up an avenue of research into mobilization and social change that is obscured by rationalist ontologies and by renderings of feelings that downplay elements that may not be articulable but that nevertheless exert force, shaping people's experiences and knowledges of the world as well as their actions. (27)

Gould crafts an articulate and compelling argument for affect in social movements that provides a place for my own project dealing with affect as a driving force in the coalition between LGSM and the miners, as well as the activism that they are producing throughout the strike.

### *Coalitional Politics*

Chávez, in her book, *Queer Migration Politics: Activist Rhetoric and Coalitional Possibilities*, writes, “a coalitional moment occurs when political issues coincide or merge in the public sphere in ways that create space to re-envision and potentially reconstruct rhetorical

imaginaries” (8). In addition, Judith Butler, in her *Notes toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* writes, “As we all know, politics do not always happen on the street; politics does not always foreground vulnerability, and coalitions can be made from any number of dispositions” (123). While Butler does not restrict coalition building to the public sphere explicitly, Chávez contends that coalitional moments evolve out of political issues that merge with the public sphere and thus create a space for productive activism and social change.

Coalitional politics has contributed to the ability for alliances to form across cultural, political, class, or racial boundaries. On this, Jill M. Bystydzienski and Steven P. Schacht write, “for successful radical alliances to occur they must be conceptualized as fluid sites of collective behavior where the blending of multiple personal identities with political activism interacts with structural conditions to influence the development of commitments, strategies, and specific actions” (2). Furthering Bystydzienski and Schacht’s notion of coalition building, Alyssa A. Samek writes, “The shift to a relational understanding of coalition politics defies the limits of organizational affiliations, formal coalitional partnerships, or temporal political efforts. In doing so, it recognizes the affective and discursive modes through which relationships are defined, enacted, and experienced” (298). It is the affective modes of coalition building that defy organizational and formal affiliations that I focus upon in this thesis.

Using coalitional politics as a basis to ground LGSM and the Dulais Valley miners’ coalition through common political issues, I am interested in coalition politics as an inherently affective process. Chávez, in her chapter titled “Coalitional Politics of Radical Interactionality” explains her conception of radical interactionality. Chávez defines radical interactionality as “a form of rhetorical confrontation that begins critique from the roots of a problem or crisis and methodically reveals how systems of power and oppression interact with one another in ways

that produce subjects, institutions, and ideologies and that enable and constrain political response” (51). LGSM and the Dulais Valley Miners’ coalition has the space to form due to their orientation to Thatcherism and their marginality under her rule.

Chávez uses interactionality as an alternative to intersectionality. Interactionality, in Chávez’s definition, encompasses both intersectionality and assemblage. Chávez argues that considering assemblage along with intersectionality “emphasizes movement, flow, and affectivities” (58). On interactionality, she explains,

Building on intersectionality, interactionality moves away from the linear metaphor and highlights the complicated and dynamic way in which identities, power, and systems of oppression intermesh, interlock, intersect, and thus interact. Interactionality addresses both the mobility and complexity of bodily experience but does not relate the lived experience of oppression though seemingly fixed identities and positions within systems of power. (58)

By focusing on interactionality and coalitional politics, I am able to look at the ways in which LGSM and the miners’ relationship is formed upon interlocking oppression, as well as the ways in which their identities are aligned through similar political goals. Butler, in her chapter titled “Bodily Vulnerability, Coalitional Politics” writes that by rethinking the body as part of the action and aim of the political, “we can start to approach a notion of plurality that is thought together with both performativity and interdependency” (151). The precarious bodies (of both the members of LGSM and the Dulais Valley Miners) imagine a site of coalition building through the affective nature of their interactions.

## *Affect*

I open the discussion of affect theory with a quote from Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Siegworth's "An Inventory of Shimmers." They write,

Affect, at its most anthropomorphic, is the name we give to those forces—visceral forces beneath, alongside, or generally *other than* conscious knowing, vital forces insisting beyond emotion—that can serve to drive us toward movement, toward thought and extension, that can likewise suspend us (as if neutral) across a barely registering accretion of force relations, or that can even leave us overwhelmed by the world's apparent intractability. (1)

I begin with this notion of affect in relation to my project as it begins to explain the power of affect to incite movement and collectivity. In addition, affect has the power to create bonds and thus form relationships and points of activism that otherwise may not be likely. In her book, *Reclaiming Queer*, Erin J. Rand writes, "But affect's escape from language's apprehension is the source of its potential—as well as its risk—as a basis for activism" (132). In relation to my project on LGSM and the Dulais Valley miners, it is precisely this potential that serves as a source for the activism and coalition building that occurs during the Miners' Strike.

For this project I turn to Siegworth and Gregg's approach to affect theory:

[affect] attends to the hard and fast materialities, as well as the fleeting and flowing ephemera, of the daily and the workday, of everyday and every-night life, and of "experience" (understood in ways far more collective and "external" rather than individual and interior), where persistent, repetitious practices of power can simultaneously provide a body (or, better, collectivized bodies) with predicaments

and potentials for realizing a world that subsists within and exceeds the horizons and boundaries of the norm (7).

In sum, affect can manifest through experiences of bodies, or shared between bodies and move toward, or push beyond boundaries.

To explain the ability of affect to circulate between bodies and create an impetus for the formation of activism, I turn to Patricia Clough who, drawing on Massumi's work, defines affect as "bodily responses, autonomic responses, which are in excess of conscious states or perception and point instead to a 'visceral perception' preceding perception" (209). Through the analysis of LGSM and the miners, affect is what creates an original space of entanglement. Previously two distinct and separate groups, I look to affect to describe the embodied experiences shared between LGSM and the miners that creates the potential for unification and engagement between the two groups.

Positioning social movements as inherently affective provides a lens through which to qualify the experiences between both groups, leading to a cohesive coalition producing radical change despite the failure of the strike itself. I identify affect in social movements through collective dancing and chanting at benefit events, picket lines, and group interactions, as well as enclaved moments of affective experience in the miners' welfare hall in Wales. I draw upon these moments to explore both the construction of the coalition and the process of creation, as well as analyze the aftermath of the strike and the LGBT rights discourse that emerged from the ties between LGSM and the National Union of Mineworkers.

LGSM and the miners' activism was founded upon multiple affective moments shared between the groups. On this, Sara Ahmed writes, "Affect is what sticks, or what sustains or preserves the connection between ideas, values, and objects" (29). For this project, I am

concerned with the “stickiness” of affect—what is able to accumulate and cause the formation of the coalition between LGSM and the miners, as well as the way affect’s stickiness causes a strong sense-memory. In articulating the remembered affective moments and encounters between LGSM and the Dulais Valley miners, I use the term *sense-memory*, which I consider to be memory specifically triggered by its affective nature. A sense-memory is recalled through embodied experiences such as members of LGSM and the Dulais Valley miners dancing in the mining hall, and later recalling this moment as one that broke down each groups’ social barriers. Citing a somewhat hostile environment upon first impressions, I am interested on the moments that worked to break down both groups’ barriers and how those connections intertwined and strengthened despite the pressure of the strike. Ahmed’s position of affect “sticking” provides a platform from which to analyze the wake behind the strike’s end as well. This understanding of affect, along with sense-memory, provides an impetus for activism and radical change that I seek to explore in this project.

Though affect often focuses upon ephemeral and embodied experience, I argue that affect can be detected and understood through archival materials. Though affect is often short-lived and built upon temporal shared experiences, I contend that archival materials can showcase glimpses of the lingering affect and hint at those embodied experiences that lead to such feelings (and subsequently, actions). In a similar sense, *Pride* was able to draw upon these archival materials and circulated stories from members of LGSM to recreate a similar feel in the film, which contributed to the film’s feeling of authenticity. Though the film is essentially a work of historical fiction, the emotional value of the film is able to mimic the ups and downs of LGSM and the Dulais Valley miner’s coalition through the way the film is framed.

Emotion is captured from members of LGSM and the Dulais Valley miners in the ways in which they communicate their memories and experiences from the strike. Through “All Out! Dancing in Dulais”, interviews, and member contribution to the 2014 film, remembered affects shine through the retellings of the story between LGSM and the miners, and therefore at least partially recreate the *feeling* of that moment. These affects are mediated through the memories shared by LGSM and the miners in the act of recreating the story through both the 1985 homemade documentary and in their recounts of their experiences in the strike—often these remembered experiences trigger sense-memories, or cause the remembered affect to come to the surface in their retellings. The sense-memories I look for are articulated through the documentary “All Out!: Dancing in Dulais,” as well as interviews with members of LGSM printed in pamphlets and other publications from the time of the strike in their recount of the time spent with the mining community. In addition, they are depicted through close reading of images and the accompanying captions in newspaper articles.

This thesis attempts to bring to attention the importance of affect and coalition building within the rhetoric of social movements. By focusing on the affective nature of LGSM and the Dulais Valley Mining Community’s coalition and the productive social and political change sparked from such coalition, I focus attention on the importance of looking at affect within social movements, and provide a case study from which to analyze such. In addition, I focus on the ways in which affect is used to communicate, re-create, and reimagine the coalition on screen to encourage activism three decades past the strike’s end. Looking at affect and coalition building within social movement rhetoric provides a point from which to analyze productive activism that falls outside of the larger aims of movements, such as the win for lesbian and gay rights evolving



from the United Kingdom Miners' Strike, though the strike as a whole failed to improve conditions for mining communities throughout the United Kingdom.

## Chapter Overview

For the first chapter, I bring together a mix of archival materials including newspaper clippings, pamphlets, photographs, and a documentary titled "All Out! Dancing in Dulais" created by members of LGSM directly following the end of the strike in 1985 to discuss the portrayal of affective moments leading to the two groups' coalition. Looking at work on coalitions and affect, I focus on the emotional encounters and interactions between LGSM and the Dulais Valley Miners and explore how these experiences fostered lasting social change despite the strike's ultimate failure.

In addition, I turn to J. Halberstam's notion of queer failure from their work, *The Queer Art of Failure*. On queer failure, Halberstam writes, "The queer art of failure turns on the impossible, the improbable, the unlikely, and the unremarkable. It quietly loses, and in losing it imagines other goals for life, for love, for art, and for being (88). In discussing the strike's failure, I am referencing the failure of the strike to create lasting change and improve conditions for the mine workers, as the National Union of Mineworkers decided to return to work after a majority vote on March 3, 1985. In this chapter, I am instead focusing on the discourse between the London chapter of LGSM and the Dulais Valley mining community, investigating how this interaction and alliance advanced LGBT inclusive politics, the lingering effects of the decision still noticeable today.

My second chapter focuses on the 2014 film, *Pride*. Directed by Mathew Warchus and produced by BBC Films, *Pride* was a major motion picture in the United Kingdom created

nearly thirty years after the strike's end. Cited under the genres of Biography, Comedy, and Drama, the film functions as a retelling and reimagining of the story of LGSM and the miners. I explore the effectiveness of *Pride* as a potential case study for future radical political activism through audience reception of the film. For this, I look at critic reviews uploaded to media sites as well as websites such as *Rotten Tomatoes*, which offers quantitative data on film reception.

The movie, *Pride*, is celebrated for retelling the story of LGSM through the incorporation of accurate historical information. The film details the emotionally charged journey, the end failure of the Miners' Strike, and a victory for Thatcher. Throughout, it remains upbeat, relying on comedy and affective moments throughout the film. *Left Unity*, a political website writes, "Yet the film still manages to create an upbeat, feel-good movie full of idealism and hope, which I would love to inspire a new generation of activists to take up the struggle" ("Pride—The True Story"). In essence, framing is essential to the film's message and the audience's perception of the film as authentic even though it is a partially fictive retelling of a true narrative.

Through reception analysis, Kenneth Burke's notion of the comic frame, and work on authenticity, I analyze the ways in which *Pride* works to inspire the viewer to strive for social change. Prior to the film's release, discourse around LGSM and the Dulais Valley miners was largely silent. *Pride* brought the history and discussion of this coalition to the forefront and provided a retelling from which to contemplate this unlikely and radical coalition and orient the politics to modern activism.

My conclusion orients the importance of affective coalition building across identity borders to the present. I focus upon the political climate post-election of Donald Trump as the 45<sup>th</sup> President of the United States largely through screenshots of activity on LGSM's official Twitter page. I focus on LGSM's present activism as a model to begin aligning across identity

groups to engage in productive activism despite the concerning state of political control and social issues worsening globally. Included in this is the decision by the United Kingdom to secede from the European Union on 24 June 2016, Trump's dual attempt to ban individuals from entering the United States from Muslim-majority nations, his promise to build a wall halting immigration from Mexico, and countless other racist, xenophobic, misogynistic, homophobic, and transphobic discourse and legislation that has risen as a result of his election. In this chapter, I gesture towards the glimmer of hope productive coalitions such as LGSM can offer social activism, noting the few activist groups that have followed in the pathways of LGSM both in name and practice.

Ultimately, this thesis contributes to an active discussion in social movement discourse about the importance of affect in social movement coalition building. Bringing together work on coalitional politics, affect, and social movement rhetoric, I attempt to trace the ways productive and radical activism forms from coalitions, specifically those built upon affect. This provides a way to look for social change outside of the overarching goals of movements and whether those demands have been met. Using the Dulais Valley Miners and LGSM's coalition as example, I posit that productive activism can be located in affective moments of coalition building. We need to turn to these moments of social change as inspiration, though they may occur outside of the confines of the original movements end goals. Moreover, *Pride* is important because of its ability to inspire such activism despite being a partially fictive re-creation of actual events. *Pride's* perceived authenticity moves viewers to believe such a coalition is possible based on LGSM's story, and encourages viewers to go out in the world to create change. As the character of Steph exclaims to LGSM and the Dulais Valley Miners in *Pride*, "Terrific. Let's bring down the government."

## Chapter One

### **Solidarity Forever: Building A/Effective Coalitions Through Queer Failure**

“Support civil liberties and the struggle of lesbians and gay people. We welcome the links forged with South Wales and other areas. Our struggle is yours. Victory to the miners” (lgsm.org).

This message was sent to the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights by the National Union of Mineworkers during the Labour Party Convention in October or 1984, just three months after the formation of the support group, Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners (LGSM) at the July 1984 London Pride Parade. Thirty years post-strike, original founding member and Lesbian and Gays Support the Miners secretary, Mike Jackson recalls, “When the first LGSM meeting took place on the eighth floor of a council flat in Bermondsey, none of the eleven people present could have known that this new found alliance (between the miners and the lesbian and gay community) would have repercussions reaching into the very heart of what had previously been seen, by many in our community, as unreachable” (“Our Story”). Situating solidarity as a driving force behind the activism produced from LGSM and the Dulais Valley miners is central to this chapter. I seek to explore the experiences between LGSM and the Dulais Valley miners as a process of coalition building, relying heavily on affective moments to achieve solidarity. Most poignant are the moments when members of LGSM and the mining community are asked to recall instances in the strike that they remember fondly.

Looking at the coalition between LGSM and the Dulais Valley miners can provide important insight into affective coalition building in social movements. The power of affect to inspire social change is shown throughout memories shared by LGSM members and miners, as

well as archival materials from the time of the strike. I theorize what moves LGSM and the Dulais Valley miners into coalitional subjectivities, and the affective experience that lead productive activism emerging out of such a coalition. Looking at artifacts from LGSM, including a homemade documentary titled “All Out! Dancing in Dulais”, as well as online-published first person accounts from members of LGSM, I note that many of the memories rely on affect to share the story of LGSM and the UK Miners’ Strike. These experiences include meetings with the Dulais Valley mining community, fundraising events, and emotional encounters with each group. I argue that the emotional interactions between LGSM and the Dulais Valley mining community succeeded in fostering ongoing comradeship, which drastically altered both groups’ perceptions of each other’s lived realities and prompted a lasting social impact despite the strike’s failure. In discussing the strike’s failure, I am referencing the failure of the strike to create lasting change and improve conditions for the mine workers, as NUM decided to return to work after a majority vote on 3 March 1985. I am instead focusing on the discourse between the London chapter of LGSM and the Dulais Valley mining community, investigating how this interaction and alliance advanced LGBT inclusive politics and improved social awareness for both parties involved.

I contend that while oppression and a mutual hatred of Thatcher and the Tory government first prompted the relationship, a series of affective experiences during the strike enriched the coalition between LGSM and the Dulais Valley miners. These affective experiences led to productive activism in the aftermath of the strike’s devastating end. Looking at the end of the strike through J. Halberstam’s notion of queer failure, I analyze the affirmative change as being a direct result of affect’s power to inspire activism, in this case altering both LGBT laws and discourse in the United Kingdom despite the strike’s failure to accomplish its goals and improve

conditions for the United Kingdom miners. While it is extremely important to look at this emergent activism in the context of the strike's greater failure, to ignore this seemingly small aspect of the social movement all together would dismiss the potential for radical social change based upon coalition building among different identity groups. I explore the importance of coalition building through affective experiences, and look at the outcomes to build solidarity among differing groups in the future in order to foster social change. To discuss this, I will rely on affect theory, while incorporating J. Halberstam's notion of queer failure as well as Karma Chávez's critique of radical interactionality regarding coalition building to discuss the discourse between LGSM and the mining community of the Dulais Valley. I argue for the importance of affect in social movement coalition building, as well as the benefits of analyzing activism in social movements through the lens of a queer failure, as this allows for study of social change beyond the goals of the overarching movement.

I analyze the discourse between LGSM and the Dulais Valley mining community through archival materials, placing key focus upon the 1985 homemade documentary titled "All Out! Dancing in Dulais." I uncover moments of preserved affect—emotional intensities that contribute to a feeling of togetherness. In addition, I analyze what I refer to as sense-memory, a memory remembered and felt that escapes language, recalls a bodily intensity, and elicits a strong identification with an object. A sense-memory is a memory specifically triggered by its affective nature and recalled through embodied experiences. In using affect theory to analyze artifacts created more than thirty years prior, I explore the members' emphasis on collaboration and coalition building through trips to the Dulais Valley and London, as well as rhetorical choices LGSM members made when crafting the audio and visual components of the documentary.

### **Affect & Solidarity in “All Out! Dancing in Dulais”**

The documentary, “All Out! Dancing in Dulais” was created in 1985 by LGSM member and official photographer, Jeff Cole. Cole uploaded the video to YouTube on 10 November 2012. The twenty-three-minute documentary has a distinctly homemade aesthetic and is comprised of a compilation of video footage and photographs that appear in slideshow form. The video footage includes both black and white and color and appears to be filmed by an amateur videographer and background noise is common. Many of the transitions appear to be in a “movie maker” style, with the screen blacking out into geometric shapes before featuring a new image. Some music is played over the photographs, including Dusty Springfield’s “I Close My Eyes and Count to Ten” and “Hard Times” by League Unlimited Orchestra.

Cole did not include any visual markers to indicate the names of the individuals speaking in the video, though some are distinguishable from comparison between other distinctly labeled photographs from the time, now uploaded to the official LGSM Twitter page. The film works to inform the viewer of LGSM and their coalition with the miners, taking up such topics as their financial contribution, meetings, fundraisers, and the emotional relationship that formed between the miners and LGSM. In addition, there is significant footage of Mark Ashton arguing in support of the miners based on shared marginality. The film establishes an enemy in Margaret Thatcher and the Tory government and showcases LGSM and the Dulais Valley miners’ coalition in opposition to oppressive government. Throughout the video, many of the members are asked to recall their favorite or most vivid memory throughout the course of the documentary.

The audio and visual components in “All Out!” play a specific role in eliciting a feeling of solidarity, as well as the emotion passed between the two groups more than thirty years since the footage and photographs were taken. Voiceover and song lyrics are strategically placed over photo and video showing celebration, comradery, and physical embraces. Returning to the member of LGSM’s explanation of their most vivid memories from the strike, the affective experiences can be traced through their recalled moments, the specific language they use, visual representations in “All Out! Dancing in Dulais” along with other archival materials. First, the documentary opens to “I Close My Eyes and Count to Ten” by Dusty Springfield, playing over footage and photos from moments during the strike. Lyrics include,

It's the way you make me feel  
 The moment I am close to you  
 Makes today feel so unreal  
 Somehow I can't believe it's true  
 The pounding I feel in my heart  
 The hoping that we'll never part  
 I can't believe this is really happening to me.

- Dusty Springfield, “I Close My Eyes and Count to Ten”

Choosing to lay Springfield’s song over footage and photos of LGSM and the miners’ interactions is strategic on the part of the editor—in this case, Jeff Cole. Featured footage and photographs include members embracing each other, laughing, posing in large groups with their fists held triumphantly in the air, and images of them dancing in pubs and the miners’ welfare hall. Two screengrabs from the documentary are shown below.





**Figures 1 & 2**

All images and footage during the duration of the song shows positive, happy moments where members of LGSM and the Dulais Valley Miners are smiling, celebrating, and appear to be enjoying the time spent with each other. The footage and photos are further portrayed as positive from Springfield's emotionally charged lyrics including "The pounding I feel in my heart" and "The moment I am close to you". The visual representation is fitting given the audio message.

Figure 1 shows miners and members of LGSM posing in London. Many members have their arms wrapped around the other. The individual in the middle is wearing the "Pits and Perverts" benefit concert tee shirt, indicating that this photo may have been taken during the miners' trip to London for the concert. Figure 2 shows Mark Ashton (right) dancing among members of LGSM and miners from the Dulais Valley. Ashton faces another member, his hand placed upon his arm in a close and friendly manner. Both moments indicate affective ties made explicit by Springfield's lyrics. Dancing as an embodied, affective experience is included in both visual representations.

Indicated in Figure 1, following the "Pits and Perverts" benefit, which included music, dancing, chanting, and an overwhelmingly successful fundraising result, members the group embrace each other in a moment of joy and bonding. This moment was one of the first times

many members of the Dulais Valley had been to London, and members of LGSM acted as tour guides, just as the miners had done when LGSM first visited Wales. This moment depicts solidarity between the groups in sharing experiences of each other's communities through song, dance, travel, and celebration. I suggest that the compilation of the footage and photos along with Springfield's "I Close My Eyes and Count to Ten" captures remembered affect. By this, I mean that the affective moments—those visceral forces that exist beyond emotion and drive us towards movement (Siegworth & Gregg 1) are remembered and recaptured through the combination of audio and visual representation of such moments on screen. Though affect is often described as ephemeral and fleeting, it has also been argued that affect can be captured and experienced detached from the time and place in which it was originally experienced. Sara Ahmed writes about the stickiness of affect. She posits, "We can be happily affected in the present of an encounter; you are affected positively by something, even if that something does not present itself as an object of consciousness. To be affected in a good way can survive the coming and going of objects" (31). For this project, I am concerned with the "stickiness" of affect—what is able to accumulate and cause the formation of the coalition between LGSM and the miners, as well as the way affect's stickiness causes a strong sense-memory. While Ahmed specifically discusses objects, I consider sense-memories to also be able to withstand the coming and going of a moment through the stickiness of affect. Affect is central to the creation of a sense-memory based on its emotional power to bring back both memory and *feeling*. The feeling incited often escapes language and evokes a more bodily sensation in regards to the memory recalled.

It is important to note the difficulty that comes with analyzing affect through historic documents. How am I to uncover affect in LGSM and the miners' coalition when I am analyzing the relationship through film and artifacts thirty years post-strike? I believe that the film and

cultural artifacts work to carry affective weight and recapture feelings experienced by the coalition through both discursive and visual recordings. In fact, if language is symbolic, how can what we talk about ever be fully captured through words alone?<sup>2</sup> To combat the fleeting and ephemeral nature granted to affect, I look to Rachel Hall's methodological ethic of "letting the object lead." She argues that the scholar must allow the object to lead in order to do justice to that artifact. To do this, a multiplicity of methods must be taken into account. I suggest that looking at LGSM's coalition with the Dulais Valley Miners through "All Out!" and other cultural artifacts offers insight into the coalition's "felt nature." In addition, looking at the coalition's affect through these documents offers insight into the importance of affect to both coalition building and productive activism within social movements. In part, the documentary "All Out!" works to preserve some of the felt intensities to be captured and replayed on screen.

The creation of "All Out!" by members of LGSM directly following the strike works to imagine the affect experienced by members during the strike. Rhetorically, this is done through specific combinations of visual and audio representations of the moment previously experienced. On affect's power to circulate and withstand, Siegworth and Gregg write, "affect is found in those intensities that pass body to body (human, nonhuman, part-body, and otherwise), in those resonances that circulate about, between, and sometimes stick to bodies and worlds, and in the very passage or variations between these intensities and resonances themselves" (1). Given Siegworth & Gregg's conception of affect, I posit that the emotions remembered (as well as

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<sup>2</sup> Kate Siegfried also argued in her master's thesis on the Riot Grrrl movement that "archival remnants of cultural production do offer scholars insight into the felt nature of movements, and further, that rhetorical critics in particular are attuned to the persuasive residues of affect as they manifest visually, materially, and discursively" (15).

those elicited from the viewer by the documentary) are those that “stick to bodies and worlds” and are carried beyond a specific moment in time due to their ability to drive us toward movement, incite action, and in this case build solidarity.

The solidarity between the miners and LGSM is apparent from the beginning of the documentary. The opening scene of the documentary communicates the moment of the coalition’s inception. following directly after the title slide is footage of four miners’ wives sitting in a half circle behind a support group sign. They are laughing and smiling, sitting casually and in close proximity to each other. There is an interviewer off screen, and the first audio captured in the documentary is one member of the women commenting on the importance of LGSM’s original visit to Wales:

Mining Community Member: “I think the first time that the group Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners came into town you know it was such a big thing within the support group ‘cause we didn’t know what to expect”

Interviewer: “What did you expect?”

Mining Community Member “We didn’t know what to expect—a bunch of weirdos then.” (Cole)

Here, the interviewee recounts the moment the miners met members of Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners in person after they had been corresponding via telephone and post for some time. Throughout newspaper articles, interviews, this documentary, and other archival materials, one thing remains static—that the members of LGSM physically visiting the Dulais Valley had the most significant impact on the formation of the groups’ bond.

In addition, throughout the archival materials when members of LGSM or miners from the Dulais Valley are asked about their favorite, most vivid, or moving moment, often times they

will share stories of experiences when the two groups were together, whether it be in the miners' welfare hall, on the picket lines, or during fundraising events. For example, one LGSM member, when asked what the high point being in LGSM has been for them, recounts,

Well, there's two things. I think the main thing was the trip to Dulais—going down to meet the people who we were actually collecting the money for and I think that was super because you know, many of us went down and stayed with the mining communities and their families and everything and people sort of put themselves out to accommodate us and well it's just amazing the response we got and that was in October. That's still going on. Like I'm getting letters and writing to people I stayed with and other people I just met down there I mean it's really nice. (Cole)

When asked to recall the second, the same individual replies, “The benefit that we did for the miners in the Electric Ballroom because the thing about that was 1,500 people in that place and sheer total support for the miners and that was amazing and when the people were speaking in the room it was unbelievable just to be there. Solidarity was really wonderful” (Cole). This interview is shown in between other clips of LGSM visiting Wales. Footage shows lesbian and gay men physically embracing members of the mining community, stills of both groups dancing together, and voiceover as well as visual footage of the Pits & Perverts benefit concert, where the crowd roars and speakers are recorded delivering poignant speeches to a large crowded room. The interview provides a first person account of the cherished memories of the strike, drawing on affective experiences and the feeling of solidarity between the two groups.

In explaining the miners' and LGSM members' experiences as affective, the particular notion of affect I am calling upon refers to affect as registered bodily experiences, energy, and

stimuli that stand in excess of consciousness and perception, and are, instead “visceral perceptions” of intensity that arise from these stimuli circulating around and upon the body (Massumi; Clough; Gould). In addition, Siegworth and Gregg write,

Affect, at its most anthropomorphic, is the name we give to those forces—visceral forces beneath, alongside, or generally *other than* conscious knowing, vital forces insisting beyond emotion—that can serve to drive us toward movement, toward thought and extension, that can likewise suspend us (as if neutral) across a barely registering accretion of force relations, or that can even leave us overwhelmed by the world’s apparent intractability. (1)

Affect, then, in terms of LGSM and the Dulais Valley Miners’ relationship works by inciting movement and collectivity between the two groups. Both material and nonmaterial affective objects can manifest through power practices and experiences of bodies, or shared between bodies and move toward, or push beyond boundaries.

These boundaries that I specifically consider refer to social and political boundaries during the 1984-5 miner strike in the United Kingdom, through the relationship of LGSM and the Dulais Valley Miners. The relationship between LGSM and the miners of the Dulais Valley was formed by frequent visits to the community throughout the year. Many members cite these experiences as being central, affective, driving experiences in their continuing activism, as well as the cause for their close and lasting bond with each other. The registered bodily experiences, explained by Siegworth and Gregg above, occur between the miners and members of LGSM and circulate in spaces, exceeding linguistic response. These affects are expressed through video footage of cheerful embracing, chanting, and dancing. These positive affects carry and build

throughout the duration of the strike to form a sense-memory and are central to the solidarity formed between the two groups.

The notion of solidarity runs constant through all of LGSM and the Dulais Valley Miner's discourse, and played a central role in the building and maintaining of such an unlikely coalition during the Miners' Strike of 1984-5. Mark Ashton, in the 1985 documentary, is shown stating,

The group started off in July at gay pride so that one community could give solidarity to the other. It's illogical, well when you think about it it's quite illogical to say 'well I'm gay, and I'm into defending the gay community but I don't care about anything else. It's ludicrous. It's important that if you're defending communities that you also defend all communities. Not just one. One of the reasons—that's the main reason I'm involved. (Cole).

Here, Ashton makes practical the support given to the mineworkers by lesbians and gay men, as he describes support to singular groups as illogical. He makes clear the importance of solidarity between and among oppressed groups in order to advance social issues and combat oppression across identities.

The ideal of solidarity may have provided the impetus for such a group to form in support of the miners, but solidarity carries throughout the strike and the formation of the coalition, and even impacts the actions and attitudes of members beyond the strike's end. Solidarity is invoked through speech, chants, and embodied experiences. Depicted through interviews, newspaper clippings, voice recordings, and video footage taken between 1984 and 1985. Following is a quote from a member of LGSM speaking about LGSM's major fundraiser, the Pits and Perverts Benefit Concert, which was held in the Electric Ballroom in London on 10 December 1984.

The benefit that we did for the miners in the Electric Ballroom because the thing about that was 1,500 people in that place and sheer total support for the miners and that was amazing and when the people were speaking in the ballroom it was unbelievable just to be there. Solidarity was really wonderful. (Cole)

This quote is followed by footage of speeches from the benefit, with members of the audience chanting and yelling in unison following ending with the words, “All I’d like to say in conclusion is victory to the miners, victory to the lesbians and gays, victory to the old, victory to the young, victory to the sick, and victory to the working class!” (Cole). Yells of support rumble through the thousand-person crowd afterwards.

In the documentary, the yells of support rumble as the recording speakers are overwhelmed. The deep yells from the crowd register much louder than the one voice speaking over the microphone on stage. The rumble from the crowd is important to the scene, as the viewer can associate the large, packed room with the loud chant and applause from the audience. The affect is, in part, captured based upon uncensored cheering clearly resulting from the above poignant, upbeat, and inspiring words spoken on stage. The collective chanting, clapping, and yelling in the audience can be described as choric communication. On choric communication, Erin Rand writes,

Utilized across a range of civic institutions, choric communication is significant not just for its persuasive clout or for the potential for community-building that it harnesses. It also highlights the indivisibility of the rhetorical form from the performative: this rhetorical tactic that is rooted in the body and gains its force only insofar as bodies align appropriately in their movement and speech. That is,



choric communication simultaneously draws our attention to the embodied performance of rhetoric and the rhetorical force of performance. (29)

The powerful response that follows the speech in the Electric Ballroom is not planned. It occurs rather a spontaneous and collective response to the rhetorical message put forth by the speaker. Encouraging victory to many identity groups, the speaker implicates the audience as a unified whole. The speech works rhetorically to elicit a feeling of collectivity and movement as the group performs in a certain way. Though unplanned, the group yells and claps. Static noise from the speakers and microphone indicate movement as the group follows each other's lead and the noise heightens. Cheering, chanting, and clapping as performative functions work to raise morale and create a feeling of collectivity, as all audience members are performing in a specific way toward the same cause. Their movement symbolizes the striving towards a closer community and coalition within the audience in order to achieve radical and productive activism.

Choric collectivity also plays a key role in the marching during the 1985 London pride parade, in which mining communities from across the United Kingdom participated to show their solidarity with lesbians and gay men. The importance in noting that the Welsh miners sang while marching in the 1985 pride parade is central to choric collectivity and solidarity-building, as singing along with LGSM while marching through the London streets provides an embodied example of the support and solidarity fostered throughout the year long strike. Miners from across the United Kingdom did show up to the London Pride parade, making LGSM the largest marching group, and therefore were asked to march at the front of the parade. An LGSM member in the documentary recounts, "The lesbian and gay pride march this year. It was more than what it normally is. That's to say, an expression of lesbians and gays marching through the streets of London saying this is our sexuality. This year, the miners, the miners' wives, their

families came, and friends of mine, people from work came along and it became a political march” (Cole). Indicating that the Pride march only became a political march once the miners were involved notes the effect the miners’ solidarity had on the message of the march. A march for LGBT rights is inherently political, though previous Pride parades were typically considered celebratory. Songs included in the documentary during the marches and remembered in interviews with LGSM members include “There is Power in a Union,” and “Solidarity Forever.” Choric collectivity is important to note here because of the power of the collective singing between members of LGSM and the mining communities. The songs included are historically used in political organizing. Having the two groups singing and marching together creates a cooperative message about the importance of solidarity between groups. Both physically and verbally, the miners marching in the 1985 Pride parade sends a message of support and solidarity not able to be achieved otherwise. By chanting and singing along lesbians and gay men, the miners perform a collectivity and the two groups become one as they sing, march, and fight for the same cause. As LGSM had stood in solidarity with them during the strike, the National Union of Mineworkers performs their support in an embodied, collective, and affective way.



**Figure 3**

The welsh mining lodges marched with lesbians and gay men, carrying their banners in the parade among banners specific to lesbian and gay issues (see Figure 3). Mining communities physically marching alongside lesbians and gay men in the wake of the strike provides perhaps the most visual depiction of solidarity between the groups. Footage from “All Out!” shows the miners and lesbian and gay men marching through the streets of London chanting and singing the lyrics to “Solidarity Forever”, a famous union anthem originally written by Ralph Chaplin in 1915. The video clip shows the marchers singing the chorus, which reads, “solidarity forever, solidarity forever, solidarity forever, for the union makes us strong.” The physicality of the miners marching alongside lesbians and gay men and the addition of collective song creates choric collectivity and communicates rhetorically about the power of affect in coalition building. Rand discusses choric communication’s emphasis on the combination of body and language as well as suggests that “choric performance produces the important effect of collective feeling” (33). This effect of collective feeling between lesbians, gay men and mining communities provides an important point for potential activism. Looking at this moment as occurring beyond the strike’s end, the coalition between LGSM and the Dulais Valley miners offers more beyond the failure of the strike and the friendships formed during the strike efforts. I argue that the choric, embodied, and remembered affects between LGSM and the Dulais Valley miners works specifically to build a coalition. By choric and embodied, I am referring to the affect generated by the miners and lesbians and gay men marching in unison and chanting song lyrics collectively. This affect is embodied since the emotion escapes language and is partially captured in gestures and bodily movements across the group. Moving and chanting in unison creates both the image and feeling of a unified whole that extends beyond and over the two separate groups as they march for a shared cause. This affect from the moment is at least partially remembered

through the footage and communicated to the viewer. Streaming footage of the moment or asking marchers about their experience specifically recalls a sense-memory that does not only include the verbal elements to the march, but evokes a specific feeling of collectivity transmitted to the audience. Though the audience does not occupy the same time and space, and may not feel the same degree of collectivity, the essence of the march is captured on screen to be recognized by the viewer as an affective moment. The affective and embodied experience detailed above played a vital role in forming and maintaining LGSM and the miners' coalition throughout and beyond the ending of the strike.

### **Affect's Importance in Coalition Building**

The encounters between LGSM and the Dulais Valley miners accumulated to form an interactional coalition that persisted far beyond the closure of the strike. Chávez's definition of interactionality, specifically in regards to coalition building helps to describe the experiences of LGSM and the miners. Chávez offers a description of interactional coalition building in her book, *Queer Migration Politics: Activist Rhetoric and Coalitional Possibilities*. She writes,

interactionality moves away from the linear metaphor and highlights the complicated and dynamic way in which identities, power, and systems of oppression intermesh, interlock, intersect, and thus interact. Interactionality addresses both the mobility and complexity of bodily experience but does not relate the lived experience of oppression through seemingly fixed identities and positions within systems of power. (58)

Chávez uses interactionality as an alternative to intersectionality, which she describes as a linear metaphor that does not account for all the ways in which identities and issues are intersected.

Interactionality then, in Chávez's definition, encompasses both intersectionality and assemblage. Chávez argues that considering assemblage along with intersectionality "emphasizes movement, flow, and affectivities" (58). Looking at the relationship between LGSM and the Dulais Valley Miners through Chávez's notion of interactional coalitional politics accounts for both the relationship's affective nature, and the power of that affect to produce productive activism and create social change despite the larger overarching failure of the United Kingdom Miners' Strike. As I imagine solidarity in this chapter to be one group offering support to another in the fight against oppression, interactional coalition building is distinct and inherently political. The interactional coalition between LGSM and the Dulais Valley miners specifically sought political change through direct action—protest, fundraising, marching, and organizing. In addition, LGSM and the miners' interactional coalition played a part in altering legislation beyond the strike's bitter failure.

It is important to note that the original basis for the coalition is indicated in LGSM and the United Kingdom Miners' mutual marginality under the rule of Margaret Thatcher, and was founded upon ideology from the Community Part of Great Britain as the Labour Left was increasingly taking up LGBT rights. During the 1984 Pride parade, where Mark Ashton and Mike Jackson began donations and subsequently formed LGSM, their argument in support for the miners was that both groups faced similar oppressions under a Tory government. This theme of solidarity, therefore, begins from the conception of LGSM through the strike and beyond its end. LGSM's original effort to provide solidarity to the miners in time created an interactional coalition largely built upon affective experiences. Below is a transcript from "All Out!", in which Ashton is asked about supporting the miners, a historically homophobic and seemingly homogeneous group.

Interviewer: “Yeah but a lot of people will say that you know if you’re collecting, ‘why should we support the miners? because the miners don’t support us.’ What do you tell people who say that to you?”

Ashton: Well I mean what do you mean when they said the miners don’t support us? The miners dig coal, which creates fuel, which actually makes electricity, people, I mean would you go down and mine and work? I wouldn’t like to go down and mine and work. One of the reasons I support miners a lot is that they go down in dirt, I wouldn’t do it.” (Cole)

Here, Ashton discounts claims that lesbians and gay people should not extend support to the miners based upon their past homophobic behavior, and their lack of support for lesbians and gay people previously. Ashton also frequently argued for class-based alliance with the mineworkers. (Smith). This quote from the documentary occurs directly after Ashton makes the comment about offering solidarity to all groups of people, analyzed in the above section. Building off of Ashton’s defense of solidarity, this quote refers to the degree to which humans are reliant on and responsible for the wellbeing of others, something that influenced the continued nature of the coalition beyond their original political alliance. Ashton, a young socialist and activist originally from Ireland, argues about the interconnectivity of different groups and identities, and the importance of solidarity in times of oppression and struggle. On a practical level, Ashton speaks to members of the LGBT community who may be skeptical of supporting a group who has offered no support to them in the past. By drawing direct reference to the entanglement of the miners’ work with the lives of LGBT people, he forms a connection that rhetorically works to gain support and thus aid in strike efforts.

Siân James, a member of the Dulais Valley mining community discusses LGSM's support. She writes,

For years lesbians and gay men have been telling us “look at us, we’re under attack, threatened by the police” and we just turned our ears away and switched off, and we may have felt sorry for a few minutes and we didn’t think of it because we weren’t partaking in acts of violence against gay men and lesbians. It was alright it was happening somewhere else. But all of a sudden you were telling us, and had been telling us and then we were there, and we knew what it was like. We’re next in line after lesbians and gays, black men, black women, there was another group for grabs that was anybody’s and that was the miners. I mean it’s a horrifying position to be in, you cannot sympathize with an oppressed group until you’ve actually been a member of one. (Cole)

Here, Siân James reflects upon and explains LGSM's support through her own experience as being part of the mining community. Prior to the miners' oppression under Thatcher's rule, they had not experienced the sort of horrific treatment gay men and lesbians routinely faced, James articulates the fact that one cannot sympathize with an oppressed group without that shared experience. This indicates the driving force of LGSM's quick dedication to fundraising and outreach. As a marginalized group, lesbians and gay men came to the decision with the experience of facing similar harassment. This mutual marginalization was key in sparking the coalition between LGSM and the miners of the Dulais Valley.

While mutual oppression and hatred of Margaret Thatcher and her politics originally sparked the relationship, a series of affective experiences lead to the strong, interactional coalition that became LGSM and the Dulais Valley miners. Chávez's notion of interactionality is

significant to note here, as she accounts for identities, oppressions and systems of power that intertwine and intermesh throughout the coalition building process. When members of LGSM physically travelled to Wales in order to meet and interact with the Dulais Valley mining community in person, identity, oppression, and power dynamics became key issues in the groups' communication. Chávez notes the complexity and mobility of such power structures, which highlight the complicated relationship between LGSM and the miners, leading to the formation of such coalition.

In addition, Chávez argues that interactional coalitions are affective in nature. Chávez discusses her own notion of radical interactionality, which she defines as “a form of rhetorical confrontation that begins critique from the roots of a problem or crisis and methodically reveals how systems of power and oppression interact with one another in ways that produce subjects, institutions, and ideologies and that enable and constrain political response” (51). In addition, Chávez discusses the idea that while minimizing affect in politics may be intriguing and affirmable, this idea could miss productive opportunities to rethink narratives using emotion. Chávez continues, “certain modes of the political could perhaps be better served by taking more seriously, or thinking more concretely, about what moves people into movement and activism generally and into coalitional subjectivities specifically (77). Agreeing with Chávez, I argue that the experiences that lead to coalition building are affective in nature, and ignoring this seemingly small aspect of a social movement denies the potential for radical social change based upon alliances across identity groups.

Turning again to “All Out! Dancing in Dulais”, participants affirm that coalition building relies heavily on affect. In the documentary, one member of LGSM notes:



Twelve months ago if anyone would have asked us if this type of alliance was possible no one would have believed us. I don't think the miners, certainly the ones that we went to twelve months ago would have imagined that they would have, in their community, the largest single donating group as a gay group, a gay and lesbian group, I think they would've just laughed. And I think we would have as well, I mean to imagine that we would have been welcomed really so warmly, I mean all the myths all the barriers of prejudice were just broken down when we went down to the valley. It was really wonderful, it made me feel like moved by the possibilities, about how you can break down those barriers, you can make alliances, you can unite and fight. It's really good. (Cole)

This quote from a member of LGSM accounts for the miners' original surprise at having a gay and lesbian identified group support the strike, as well as the experience of bonding within the group over the course of a year. Though not recalling specifically a choric collective or embodied experience, this memory recalls affect's power to change perception. In stating "all of the myths and barriers of prejudice were just broken down when we went down to the valley" and "it made me feel like moved by the possibilities" the speaker indicated a force of change beyond words—which I argue is affect at play. The original exchange between the groups is important to note because of the preconceived notions each group carried before meeting the other. This speaker does not refer to a physical barrier being broken down, but rather an emotional one that then allowed such an alliance. Other members recall the original meeting and more explicitly refer to the emotionally charged encounter through embodied experiences.

Mark Ashton further supports LGSM and the miners' experience with embodied affect when he notes in a 1986 interview, "For political reasons, it was actually much more important

to us to make those personal links with people, because those are things that will continue after the strike. We've taken miners to gay bars and we've gone to Wales. Lesbians and gay men have danced in a miners' welfare hall, which was outrageous. Together" (Flynn at al 41). Ashton cites dancing as one of the memorable experiences that lead to a political coalition. Here, affect is explicitly called into action as a driving force behind LGSM's activism. Describing dancing as "outrageous" alludes to the embodied experience of gay men and lesbians dancing alongside the miners. Ashton notes that it was outrageous to dance together because of how wildly different the two groups were. Coming together, moving and dancing in close proximity to each other allows positive affects to circulate within the space and flow among bodies. On affect's ability to pass among bodies, Ahmed writes, "If happiness creates objects, then such objects are passed around, accumulating positive affective value as social goods" (21). Here, I consider objects to be the affective takeaway from the positive experiences. For example, from the miners visiting the Dulais Valley welfare hall, positive takeaways include a new orientation to and understanding of lesbian and gay people. Ashton's emphasis on the word "together", and on the physical commute to Wales and London for each group indicates an affective experience that moves beyond what can be captured in language. Though he discusses this encounter through language, he gestures to a take-away that is so much more vibrant than he indicates through speech—he gestures to embodied experiences. The examples Ashton provides of going to the miners' welfare hall, and bringing miners to the London gay bars refers to embodied experiences that are visceral and passionate. Affect's ability to circulate between and among bodies in a space creates the potential for emotions to create sense-memories. These sense-memories build upon each other to provide a powerful bond. Ahmed discusses the power of happy affects to circulate and withstand (31). I argue that the creation of sense-memories by positive affects—in

this specific case song and dance—withstand and survive past the time of creation. The intensities can be recalled through memory and the feeling can escape language’s barrier. The feeling of togetherness and the “outrageousness” of their encounters is preserved through remembered feeling. LGSM and the Dulais Valley miners’ subjectivity as oppressed groups under the rule of Thatcher along with the foundation of multiple affective experiences created the radical interactional coalition that became LGSM, which created the power to motivate social change beyond the goals of the strike.



Caption: “FIVE THOUSAND lesbians, gays, and supporters marched through Central London to a festival in Jubilee Gardens [blanked out text] the culmination of Pride ’85. The support of South Wales miners swelled what was the biggest gay demo for years.” (Source: Peoples’ History Museum UK)

#### Figure 4

The visual result of the social change created by LGSM and the Dulais Valley miners’ coalition is depicted in Figure 4 from the 1985 London Pride Parade, archived in the Peoples’ History Museum in Manchester, United Kingdom. The photo shows a crowd of people gathered under the Lesbians & Gays Support the Miners banner. Some people have their hands up in a fist while others hold the banner in place or raise flags above the crowd. People appear to be smiling or chanting, as their mouths are opened and their expression indicates yelling. This photo

appeared in a newspaper shortly after the 1985 London Pride event. From the “stickiness” (Ahmed 29) of affect, miners from South Wales were moved to provide embodied, affective support of lesbians and gays in what became the largest lesbian and gay demonstration in recent years, and the largest London Pride march to that point. On the miners’ decision to support lesbians and gay men politically, miner David Donovan says prior to the march in December 1984:

You have worn our badge, ‘Coal not Dole’, and you know what harassment means, as we do. Now we will pin your badge on us, we will support you. It won’t change overnight, but now 140,000 miners know that there are other causes and other problems. We know about blacks, and gays, and nuclear disarmament. And we will never be the same. (“Our Story”)

This statement, delivered at the “Pits and Perverts” benefit concert, depicts the underlying force of the alliance—“you know what harassment means, as we do.” Deployment of this coalitional issue was largely affective and emotionally strong. First, it gets at the very basis of human connection and compassion. In saying “you have worn our badge,” Donovan directly addresses members of LGSM who sacrificed their energy, time, and sometimes safety to support a group that had not historically been supportive in return. Using this language is a powerful symbolically embodied way of communicating what it means to really understand one another’s struggles from their perspective. Further, Donovan eloquently describes the nature of the two groups’ relationship. “We will never be the same” resonates with the audience, as positive change and activism has been produced here. The discourse between the miners and LGSM has opened minds, and implied by the quotes opened their “hearts” as well. In other words, the actions taken by LGSM to support the miners has forever changed the miners’ view of all groups

of people. By stating that they will forever be changed, and that was at least in part due to the actions taken by LGSM to stand in solidarity with the miners, he relies on affect for delivery. Donovan engages emotional language, such as “we will never be the same”—a strategic rhetoric employed to focus on the extraordinary impact of LGSM and the miner’s coalition. He implies that the interactional coalition was at once considered absurd, and defends that process of change in a poignant way.

### **Queer Failure in LGSM and the Dulais Valley Miners’ Interactional Coalition**

Though this positive change is extremely productive to support the centrality of affect to social movements, the bitter failure of the UK Miners’ Strike cannot go without consideration. Therefore, looking at the coalition between LGSM and the Dulais Valley Miners in the context of the greater failure of the 1984-5 Miners’ Strike through J. Halberstam’s notion of queer failure offers a useful lens through which to analyze productive activism that occurs tangentially to the larger movement.

In *The Queer Art of Failure*, J. Halberstam posits, that queer failure flips the notion of the impossible, the improbable, the unlikely, and the unremarkable (88). Through the course of the book, Halberstam reconstructs failure into a non-negative, and explores the positive experiences and results that can derive from one’s queer failure. Originally explored as an alternative to conventional notions of success that many queer lives cannot, do not, or choose not to live up to.<sup>3</sup> I argue that the coalition between LGSM and the Dulais Valley mining community is its own queer failure—one that never fulfilled the goals of defeating Thatcher in her attempt to weaken the United Kingdom’s largest and strongest union at the time, yet continually fostered an

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<sup>3</sup> José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*

affectively strong coalition that created affirmative change in both law and discourse surrounding LGBT rights in the United Kingdom. In addition, this result of the “unsuccessful” strike was equally socially important, with the impacts still weaving their way through current LGBT rights discourse in the United Kingdom. I say this not to diminish the horrific reality of the strike’s failure, but rather to re-conceptualize the way we gauge failure in social movements, and consider smaller movements of activism in the realm of the movement as a whole. While the tragedy of such a loss cannot be ignored, smaller moments of activism are important to acknowledge. I posit that these pockets of productive activism working within the larger movement work to queer the strike’s failure.

Halberstam largely discusses queer failure through gender norms, but I apply the end result of the failure to social activism and affective moments, such as the case of LGSM and the Dulais Valley miners’ coalition. As discussed above, the result of the miners’ strike is noted as one of Thatcher’s greatest victories, as the strike ultimately ended without success and the National Union of Mineworkers voted to return to work without any changes on 3 March 1985. On this, LGSM member Colin Clews writes, “Sadly, the strike ended without victory for the miners – I remember a particularly depressing LGSM meeting on the day the strike was called off. However, the links that were forged between the two communities were well established by that time” (Clews). I argue that the space that occurs directly after a queer failure is filled with emotional intensities, and offers a vibrant location for radical and productive activism.

As discussed in the introduction, the Labour Party in the United Kingdom voted to support LGBT rights at the Labour Party Convention held in Bournemouth in July of 1985, four months after the strike’s end. This decision followed LGSM and the Dulais Valley Miners’ coalition, which spread to other support groups throughout the United Kingdom. The convention

was held shortly after the 1985 London pride parade, in which mining communities from across the United Kingdom marched alongside lesbians and gay men three months after the strike ended. On this moment, one member of LGSM recounts, “[the march] was people actually wanting to say something about their feelings about lesbian and gay rights and the attack on our community” (Cole). This is not to diminish the political nature of the Pride parade pre-1985, but rather to emphasize the power of solidarity and coalition building in its physical and public manifestations. The miners showing solidarity in such a public way opened up the possibility for social change based upon lingering affects beyond the strikes’ failed end, as the coalition remained strong months after the official end of the strike, and the mining communities felt driven to show public support of lesbians and gay men in an embodied way by showing up to march alongside the lesbian and gay community in the Pride march.

The time after a queer failure is not simply the end for those involved in that act. A queer failure suggests that there is something after the point of said failure that has potential to evolve into something productive. In the months following the strike’s failure, the negative feelings and mourning evolved into a productive affect, a heavily emotionally charged moment where intensities and visceral actions manifested into the form of solidarity and activism. The miners of South Wales attending the 1985 Pride march was an embodied example of this solidarity and activism which then followed through and helped create a major breakthrough in LGBT rights in the United Kingdom. In addition, Sian James, a member of the Dulais Valley mining community discusses another tangible effect of the coalition. In the documentary, she states,

In our local community one of the things that captures peoples’ attention immediately—everyone is eager to film it and take photographs of it—is the van. It is the tangible proof of the support and friendships that were made. I mean it’s

there, its active in the community, used by the community. I mean, it's marvelous because when I see that van coming down the road I see people doing double-takes. I don't mind that at all because it means they have to think about lesbians and gays themselves and then they think, well what does that mean? How did that van come to be where it is? What is the history behind that van? And that immediately starts off a chain of thought and reaction. (Cole)

The van James is referring to is the one donated by LGSM during the strike. The van is red in color and has "Donated by Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners" printed on both sides of the front doors. This van, as James explains it, is symbolic of the lasting friendship and coalition between the groups. The van was used well beyond the end of the 1984-5 strike, just as the activism sparked by the two groups carried on beyond March of 1985. Furthering this, James states, "LGSM, Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners were instrumental in bringing lesbian and gay rights to the forefront of the Labour Party conference. It had to be, because you've never had a group that had such a high profile" (Cole). Speaking about the July 1985 Bournemouth conference, James confirms that the coalition between LGSM and the miners was instrumental in the sweeping vote to enshrine lesbian and gay rights into the Labour Party manifesto. For the first time in history, no one spoke against the movement due to a block affirmative vote on behalf of the National Union of Mineworkers.

"Out Proud & Fighting", a Socialist Workers Party pamphlet from London in 1988 makes a direct link between the LGSM's coalition and the miners' explicit support of LGBT rights. The pamphlet states,

The organisation of a lesbian and gay support group led to a delegation of miners with pit lodge banner and band leading the 1985 Gay Pride demonstration. Here



was a section of the working class who before the strike could hardly have been equaled for their reactionary tradition on matters of sexuality. Miners are an all-male workforce—women are excluded by law from working down the pit. Many lived in isolated villages away from the ‘corrupting’ influences of large cities and the gay scene. And yet in spite of all this their experience during the strike meant a section of miners were won to supporting gay rights and a number of miners gained the confidence to come out. Even a defensive strike, which the workers lost, showed how the experience of struggle can overcome reactionary ideas—struggle unites. (Halifax 36).

Halifax cites mutual struggle as the most intrinsic value uniting the miners and lesbians and gay men. However, she also discusses the social impact of LGSM travelling to Wales and spending time in the mining villages. As Wales is a largely rural country and the mining towns in particular are home to an ostensibly homogenous group of people, having lesbians and gay men spend time in the villages opened up worldviews that had not previously been possible. Halifax discusses the emotional support members of LGSM provided miners who identified as gay and wished to come out, and she alludes to the importance in lesbian and gay people realizing the power of a union with the mining communities.

The affective temporality that emerged from the strike’s queer failure proved to form into a highly powerful instance of social activism. Jonathan Blake recounts, “They [the miners] were amazing—the generosity of spirit. These people were being hounded and starved into submission, but whatever they had they shared. We had wonderful times – lots of humor and jokes” (Lobb). Here, in the midst of discussing the miners’ marginality and the horrible harassment they faced, Blake also relies on sentiment to discuss his relationship to the mining

community. Acknowledging that the strike failed to explicitly improve conditions for the miners, he holds onto this sense-memory of the miners' nature, describing them as generous, and noting their memories as humor-filled and wonderful. Sian James states, "the actual experience of the strike for both sides brought the two together and actually sort of made a step possible for getting that motion of support passed. There was no one speaking against it" (Cole). Holding onto these experiences through the strike, the 1985 Pride march, the Bournemouth vote, and beyond suggests the sheer impact this specific coalition had on both the members of LGSM and the mining community as well as LGBT people living in the United Kingdom presently. I argue that it is the accumulation of sense-memories—of positive affective objects and moments--that inspired the continuation of activism in the wake of the strike's end and led to the material effects of the coalition, such as enshrining LGBT rights into the Labour Party manifesto, the donation of the van to help miners commute to and from the community, and the discourse that was created by the coalition, as James discusses in the above quote about the van. Post-strike people were thinking more critically about lesbian and gay rights due to the lasting material effects of the coalition. It is here that I propose the affective trail at the end of a failure can be one of the most potent opportunities for activism.

Regarding queer failure and affect, Halberstam writes, "I also turn the meaning of failure in another direction, at the cluster of affective modes that have been associated with failure and that now characterize new directions in queer theory" (23). Looking to the above instance of affect and activism as supporting Halberstam's notion of an altered direction in queer theory is one example of reimagining the way failure is conceptualized. By looking at the potential in the temporal space after queer failure, a new way to view the potentiality of a "queer failure" emerges. In looking at LGSM and the miners' coalition, LGSM member Colin Clews notes, "I

don't think anyone realised just how strong and significant that support was to be" (Lobb). The affective power of activism moved beyond the conscious realm of the possible. By moving beyond the conscious realm of the possible, LGSM and the miners were able to make important interventions in public LGBT discourse, though the strike devastatingly failed to make significant, if any improvements in the miners' everyday realities. Looking at the strike as a queer failure turns focus away from the aspects of the movement which failed to reach goals, and in turn, imagines a productive discourse that rethinks the ways in which social movements approach and employ affect, and ways in which activism-focused coalitions are formed. In doing this, it is important to not diminish the horrific failure of the strike as a whole, but rather suggest other ways coalitional politics and affect can contribute to productive activism in ways not intended by the larger movement.

### **Conclusion: Orienting Affect, Coalitional Politics, & Queer Failure Toward Social Movement Activism**

What does looking to affect do for both interactional coalitions and queer failure in social movement activism? In this chapter, I have discussed the ways in which interactional coalitions are inherently built upon affective moments. In addition, through the example of LGSM and the Dulais Valley miners' interactional coalition, I argued that the intense affective moments in the wake of a queer failure are important sites for the potentiality of productive activism. In looking to those moments, focus is shifted away from the failure in itself, and instead creates a positive twist on the outcome on top of those moments of "unsuccess." Using this as a framework to look at social movements, it creates another location for potential advances in that activism after acknowledging and analyzing the implications of the movement's failure. In other words, just

because the miners' strike ended without success, does not mean that productivity did not emerge from the action.

The exploration of affect in social movement activism, coalition building, and queer failure provides an important point to begin looking for small successes, snippets, and accumulations of productive affective and effective solidarity forming. In other words, by focusing attention on affective moments both in the process of coalition building and in the wake of queer failures provides insight into how alternate successes and discourses arise out of broader social movements. In addition, focusing on the heavily affective aspect of a queer failure can point to the notion that solidarity and action do not need to end with that failure. The wake of the failure is not merely a point for self-reflexivity, it is also a space to carry on trying to reach one's activist goals. It actually creates a space for that to happen, a space that is a potentially powerful location for action and change. Instead of solely focusing on the broader social movement, which, in this instance was the United Kingdom Miners' Strike and its ultimate failure to improve conditions for the United Kingdom miners, focusing also upon the power of affect in a "queer failure" can highlight potential pockets of productive activism working underneath the framework of larger social movements. On affect in social movements, Deborah Gould writes, "The *movement* in 'social movements' gestures toward the realm of affect; bodily intensities; emotions, feelings, and passions; and toward uprising" (3). This affective moment in time in the wake of a failure creates the possibility of a new motion, or a new inspiration for continued radical activism. Then, in a sense, it is the failures that inspire activism to keep going, and to keep striving for movement and progress in the midst of a range of shortcomings and failures. This affective moment and collection of sense-memories provide new moments for coalition buildings and embodied affective solidarity.

This solidarity experienced by LGSM and the Dulais Valley Miners lives on through BBC's 2014 film, *Pride*, which tells the tale of LGSM from its formation in July of 1984 beyond the strike's end. Championed as a powerful, heartfelt, and "forgotten" story, critics and reviewers cite the film's overwhelming affect and its ability to remember the events of the strike. LGSM members were heavily involved in the making of the script, and the film is regarded for its historical accuracy. *Pride* works to inspire activism and remains relevant thirty years after the strike's end. In the following chapter, I move to focus on *Pride*, analyzing the film largely through audience reception.

## Chapter Two

### Authenticity's Affect: The Comic Frame and Activist Inspiration in *Pride*

Originally released in the United Kingdom on 12 September 2014, BBC's *Pride* captures the historic tale of the activist group, Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners (LGSM) and their coalition with the Dulais Valley mining community of South Wales from conception through the end of the 1984-5 United Kingdom Miners' Strike. Director Matthew Warchus and writer Stephen Beresford worked extensively with members of LGSM to attempt to retell the events as they unfolded during the strike while remaining true to the film's genre. *Pride* is labeled under the genres of biography, comedy, and drama on IMDb's website, and follows conventions of British working class comedies such as *The Full Monty* and *Billy Elliot*. Revered for its witty humor and emotionally uplifting moments, *Pride* captured the hearts of viewers and critics, scoring a 7.8 on IMDb and a 92% approval rate on *Rotten Tomatoes*. Fans deem *Pride* an artful retelling of an "extraordinary true story" ("Pride" (2014)). *Pride* tells the tale of the empowering and heartfelt journey between LGSM and the Dulais Valley Miners, relying on emotional moments and humor to navigate the heartbreaking end of the strike and all of the high and low moments in between.

What is interesting about *Pride's* release is the relevance and warm reception the tale received thirty years after the strike's end. While remaining historically accurate, *Pride* brings into conversation issues that persist and remain relevant and has been dubbed a timeless tale. Though the plot is historically grounded in the mid-eighties, the inspirational story of LGSM and the miners' coalition extends beyond a singular point in history. *Left Unity* writes, "Yet the film still manages to create an upbeat, feel-good movie full of idealism and hope, which I would love to inspire a new generation of activists to take up the struggle" ("Pride—The True Story"). In

this chapter, I provide a reception analysis of *Pride*, analyzing the ways in which *Pride* offers both a retelling and obscuring of the coalition between LGSM and the Dulais Valley miners. I trace *Pride*'s emotional impact to the film's framing and analyze the importance of the film's authenticity to critics and reviewers. I contend that the way *Pride* is framed is vital to the film's perceived authenticity, and further problematize the centrality of the reviewer's focus on authenticity, as *Pride* is a partially fictive retelling of a real event. In addition, I discuss the implications of *Pride*'s creation and relevance as a major motion picture thirty years after the strike's end. *Pride*'s use of the comic frame to create the perception of authenticity directly contributes to the film's "success"—its ability to deliver affect and inspire activism. In order to analyze *Pride* through audience reception, I draw upon newspaper and critic reviews of the film, interviews from original members of LGSM about *Pride*, and content from the film itself.

In this chapter I posit that *Pride*'s perceived authenticity is directly contingent on the way the film is framed. Through Burke's comic frame, *Pride* mimics the style of many successful British working class comedy-dramas before its time, such as *The Full Monty* and *Brassed Off*. Taking the form of previous successful British comedies aids in its reception as genuine. Its authenticity is also directly tied to the choice of the film makers to tell the tragic story of the United Kingdom Miners' Strike and the empowering coalition of LGSM through comic reference. The film's use of the comic frame deliver's message and meaning in a strategic way that helps create the strong affect in *Pride*. Building upon my discussion of affect's power to incite movement and collectivity, I look at the ways in which the film attempts to recapture and retell these experiences through the film, and I argue that the recaptured experiences work to create a perception of authenticity that is essential to the film's ability to move and inspire.

*Pride's* content follows the story of LGSM and the Dulais Valley miners throughout the course of the strike. The film's opening scene begins with LGSM founder, Mark Ashton, in his London flat. A speech by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher plays on the television in the background as Ashton gets ready for the 1984 London Pride parade. Upon hearing the speech, which discusses the ongoing strike, Ashton collects buckets as he exits his flat and heads to the parade. It is here where LGSM is originally founded and the first funds are collected during the parade. The film imagines the origin of LGSM and as it shows the gathering of members at the Gays The Word bookshop in London. In the film, Ashton is recorded as saying, "Who hates the miners? Thatcher. Who else? The police, the public, and the tabloid press. The only problem we've got that they haven't is Mary Whitehouse, and that can only be a matter of time" (*Pride*)<sup>4</sup>. Here, the film constructs the basis of the coalition, as members are inspired to join LGSM and help support the miners' based on their mutual marginality and under the rule of Thatcher. By stating that both groups are "hated" by the same individuals and the media indicates a need for a coalition based on shared oppression despite their rocky past relations.

*Pride* follows the story of a group of founding members from LGSM over the course of a year, starting with the 1984 London pride parade and ending with the same parade in 1985. The story retells the relationship from conception past the end of the strike, reimagining fundraising events, time spent in the miner's welfare hall, and trips both groups took between South Wales and London. Though the film remains upbeat and relies on poignant and humorous moments to help drive the message, *Pride* also grapples with the struggle of aligning these two groups to come together for a common cause. *Pride* dramatizes the resistance from some of the mining

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<sup>4</sup> Mary Whitehouse was political activist and social conservative who openly opposed LGBT rights and social liberalism. This statement illustrates the miners' and LGBT peoples' shared marginality under the rule of Thatcher.



community upon realizing that a lesbian and gay group was to visit and support the community. The film also does not diminish the fact that members of both LGSM and the Dulais Valley miners were undoubtedly pushed out of their comfort zone, especially in the beginning of the relationship, and relies heavily on scenic recreation to drive this point home.

In addition to following the coalition's political and personal collective struggles, the film follows each member's journey through the year, relying heavily on affect to deliver the feel of the bond shared between both groups. Cinematic and rhetorical elements are employed to capture affect. For example, the diegetic sound during the Pits and Perverts benefit in the film draws the audience into the scene. Complete with crowd roaring, background music behind character conversations, and microphone static, the film recreates the feel of the concert and depicts the affect on screen thirty years later. In this sense, I refer to affect as existing beyond conscious knowing and what language can capture (Siegworth and Gregg 1). The uplifting and poignant moments are intensified by the employment of comedy, such as Ashton's campy references to interviewers that leaves the audience giggling. *Pride* is relatable through the comic frame. Key moments pack an emotional punch and leaves the viewer crying, laughing, and inspired to go out in to the world and make change. In addition, the authenticity perceived by the viewer directly makes the film inspirational—the viewer needs to imagine such a coalition has happened in the past to believe one can be productive in the future.

### **Brief History of Contemporary British Cinema & Reception Studies**

The inspirational and nostalgic tale in *Pride* is not unique to British cinema, but rather incorporates popular British style. Sarah Street, who notes that much of British culture is founded in nostalgia, writes, “the ‘heritage’ industry’s ability to evoke nostalgic responses for

times not directly experienced by its consumers is similarly reflected in films that mobilize affective regimes set in both the past and the present” (127). *Pride* does just this. Its heavy reliance on the recreation of affective moments forms the feeling of a close proximity to the remembered events regardless of the consumer’s previous experiences. Street also affirms that the style has had a “profound impact on the ways in which British films are seen to offer cultural commentary about the contemporary mobilization of the past” (128). This is important when looking at *Pride* as a British comedy and drama deeply rooted in British heritage, as the film makes arguments about the need for activism based on a past social movement.

In reviews, *Pride* is most often compared to *Brassed Off*, a 1996 film directed by Mark Herman about the British coal mining industry. On *Brassed Off*, Brian MacFarlane writes,

Bleakly aware of Thatcherite policies, and with the miners’ strike of the previous decade still fresh in mind, *Brassed Off*, set in the small Yorkshire mining town of Grimley, pulls off a tricky balancing act. On one hand, it doesn’t shrink the pain brought on by pit closures—economic stress leading to ruptured domestic and emotional lives. On the other hand, it still manages to be an exhilarating exercise in human resilience and music-making’s power to lift the spirit. (370)

With *Brassed Off*’s release nearly two decades prior, *Pride*’s use of similar genre conventions helps contribute to its acceptance as part of a British cinematic style. In addition, because of its similar content to *Brassed Off*, following the previous comedy-drama’s stylistic conventions is a rhetorically strategic move, as *Pride* rides the success of a widely cherished British film. The reviews I analyze throughout this chapter often link *Brassed Off* and *Pride*, receiving *Pride* as a quintessential British comedy. Having *Pride* follow conventions of British comedy adds to its perceived authenticity, as it is not breaking from the mold of successful films. In addition,

framing the film through comedy communicates the message to the viewer in a relatable and poignant way. In order to analyze this, I rely on reception analysis through reviews of *Pride*.

Film reception analysis takes up the notion that “the audience’s interpretive practices explain a work’s meaning” (Goldstein & Machor xii). Beginning from the audience’s reception and moving toward form and content of the film itself, reception analysis looks to uncover meaning through interpretations of the film, rather than strictly analyzing content. Doing this helps to situate the film in mainstream discourse, as well as describe external factors occurring around the film’s release as influencing the meaning of that work. This is especially pertinent in *Pride*, as the historic plotline of the film is oriented in a way that the content remains relevant in its 2014 release.

Rhetorical strategies and frames that the filmmakers engage undoubtedly contribute to its modern relevance. While reception studies acknowledges historical and rhetorical approaches, it also analyzes the way the audience perceives the film to further situate its political significance and cultural meaning. Looking to viewer and critic reception is key to my analysis of *Pride*. Goldstein & Machor go as far as stating that, “Within reception and response studies, the act of reading has repeatedly been seen as a form of production by virtue of its role in shaping—and even constituting—the meaning and significance of texts.” (xix). There has, however, been criticism of reception studies’ habit of solely focusing on the audience as meaning-makers, and leaving out content and production analysis completely. On this, Janet Staiger writes, “I find such a proposition dangerous not merely for the reason that any radical historian might (it elides the incontestable force of the historical real to affect the reader) but because that inference only inverts fallacious binary oppositions: producer/consumer, author/reader” (1). To combat this issue, she writes that in using reception studies, it is important to not ignore the creator in favor

of the reader. (4). In addition, Staiger acknowledges that, “Despite this disclaimer, the use-value of reception studies does include some weighty business for film philosophy, criticism, and history for political and social change” (4). This is imperative to note in the context of my analysis of *Pride*, as I look to audience reception without ignoring the content and production of the film itself. While the audience’s interpretation and reaction of the film may drive my analysis, I further my argument by also delving into analysis of key scenes, frames, and production. This is because, though audience reception makes meaning, the rhetorical strategies implemented by the film makers also influence the audience’s orientation and understanding of the film—for *Pride*, specifically the comic frame, the reliance on affect to make meaning, and the audience’s perception of the film as authentic. I posit that it is productive to consider film meaning, reception, and impact in the analysis of *Pride*.

### **Comic Frame(ing) “Pride”**

Reception analysis is appropriate for analyzing *Pride*’s impact through Burke’s comic frame as success of the affect captured in the film manifests through critic reviews. Odie Henderson, reviewer for *Roger Ebert*, writes,

*Pride* wears on its sleeve the desire to make its audience stand up and cheer. It is willing to occasionally plumb the depths of familiar formula to achieve its goal. Here is a true story that could have been played as straight drama, yet the filmmakers opted for a lighter approach to capture hearts and minds. (Henderson)

Henderson notes an embodied reaction to the feeling incited by both cinematic and contextual elements when he writes that the film, quite literally, makes his audience collectively stand up and cheer. This response is appropriate due to the powerfully emotional ending, tying together a

range of feelings from joy, sadness, and compassion as the film navigates the characters' fates post-ending, the bitter failure of the strike, and the change marked by LGSM's coalition. This ending is dependent on Kenneth Burke's notion of the comic frame.

Christiansen and Hanson describe Burke's notion of framing, specifically the comic frame as,

Burke argues that humans organize their discourse and actions in accordance with the major poetic forms of epic, tragedy, elegy, satire, burlesque, and the grotesque. This, one need not choose tragedy as a frame of reference even when confronting life and death issues. In contrast to the impulse toward tragedy in Western society, Burke argues that it is "imperative" that we embrace comedy because only it can protect us from "the most idiotic tragedy conceivable: the willful ultimate poisoning of this lovely planet, in conformity with a mistaken heroics of war" (159).

Christiansen and Hanson further describe that comedy does not necessarily differ from tragedy in the subject matter. Rather, "their depiction of the human role in affecting social outcomes is decidedly different" (159). Further, it is important to note that speaking in the comic frame does not always have to incite humor, but rather the comic frame "offers hope to society because the efficiency of human agency, reason, and community are affirmed" (Christiansen & Hanson 160). A particularly striking review of the effects of framing *Pride* through comedy discusses the power of the film to create a "standing ovation" type of ending. This standing ovation and overwhelming affect indicate the film's success in fostering hope and inspiration for social change.

The ending scene depicts the members of LGSM marching past parliament during the 1985 Pride parade, accompanied by dozens of mining lodges from all over the United Kingdom, specifically concentrated in Wales. LGSM carries their banner at the front, reading “Lesbians & Gays Support the Miners” with the “O” in “support” forming a peace sign. The song, “There is Power in a Union,” plays in the background as the marchers are silently depicted on screen celebrating, embracing, chanting, and laughing amongst one another. During this, white text appears on the screen, one by one telling the story of each main character. Siân James, one of the miners’ wives, goes on to college and in 2005 becomes a member of Parliament representing Swansea East. She is shown marching and smiling directly after the text. Jonathan Blake is shown in an embrace with his partner as the text tells that he was one of the first people diagnosed with HIV in the U.K. and, at the time of the film’s creation, had recently celebrated his 65<sup>th</sup> birthday.

A particular poignant and heartbreaking moment occurs when text is placed over Mark Ashton’s image, who was one of the founding members of LGSM. Ashton is shown celebrating, laughing, and yelling with a large smile on his face. He is sitting atop another man’s shoulders with a megaphone in hand. The text first reads, “Mark Ashton continued to fight for political and civil rights causes.” The text then fades and a new sentence appears on screen over the same video of Ashton yelling, smiling into the megaphone, and positioned higher than the crowd. It reads, “He died on February 11<sup>th</sup> 1987, just days after his diagnosis with HIV AIDS.” (Figure 5). Next, the text reads, “He was 26.” Throughout the course of the film, Ashton’s charismatic and inspiring character worked to capture the hearts of the audience. His diagnosis is only subtly hinted at during the film, and the choice to portray the information of his death in this manner is emotionally powerful and somber, juxtaposing the upbeat, happy, and healthy looking Ashton

shown behind the text. This juxtaposition is rhetorically strategic and captures the tragic reality HIV/AIDS epidemic that was emerging around the time of the strike. By revealing Ashton's death in this manner at the end of the film, the viewer first has a chance to become captivated by Ashton's character, making for an even larger impact in revealing his death. In addition, revealing that he was only 26 draws on a specific feeling of his lost potential. The audience has come to know Ashton as a passionate activist fighting for civil rights. His death at 26, though singular in occurrence, makes a larger statement about the tragic loss of so many young lives to AIDS. Using Ashton as an example heightens the emotional impact, as one has intimately followed a year of his journey through the course of the film.



**Figure 5**

Burke's comic frame also suggests change by providing a new perspective rather than confrontation. As Christiansen and Hanson explain,

When individuals or groups act in the comic frame, they commit themselves to an approach that runs counter to the prevailing tragic impulse in Western society. Rather than reducing social tensions through mystification, scapegoating, or banishment, rhetoric in the comic frame humorously points out failings in the

status quo and urges society to correct them through thoughtful action rather than tragic victimage. (161)

Therefore, the new perspective is brought about specifically by how the information is framed. In the comic frame, humor is used to pilot viewers towards social awareness and urges them to take action in order to bring about change. In addition, Hugh Duncan writes, “comedy exposes transgressions of rights, but does not question the rights themselves” (411). In this sense, *Pride* works more to bring about awareness of transgressions of rights and encourage action to change social issues.

I find this interesting in the context of *Pride*, specifically LGSM and the Dulais Valley Miners’ coalition, and how that is portrayed through film. Though the strike was undoubtedly confrontational, the way the relationship between the two groups is highlighted through moments of increased social awareness and compassionate gestures though troubled at the start. Regarding this, film reviewer Odie Henderson writes,

The takeaway message of *Pride* is that meeting someone of a different race, gender, orientation or status is a lot more informative, honest and enriching than experiencing them from the error-prone safe haven of a TV set's depiction or favorite website's description of them. In doing so, one can make a difference for oneself and the world at large. We are not that different from one another, and we could use all the help we can get. (Henderson).

Here, Henderson notes the power of *Pride* to encourage activism. He defines the takeaway message as one of heightened social awareness. Through this singular story, one is prompted to go out in the world and work to encourage acceptance across identities, cultures, and experiences. *Pride* takes a historic event and reorients it towards the present, partially making the



story relevant thirty years past the strike. Part of what contributes to *Pride*'s role as a timeless story is the way the film is framed through comedy. While Margaret Thatcher is a clear "enemy" in *Pride*, focus is instead placed upon the entire conservative party and their oppression of the working class. It is this situation that allows coalition between the miners and LGSM to originate, as well as construct a narrative against systems of oppression while not relying heavily on confrontation to drive the story. The story relies on moments of heavy affect and humor to drive the narrative and shape the viewer's orientation to the characters and situation. Instead of relying on moments of violence and hostility, the story is propelled by moments of positive affect—contributing to a sense of community, belonging, and support in the fight against Thatcher and the Conservative party. The story is framed in relation to the connection between lesbians and gay men and the National Union of Mineworkers in their fight against oppression. The viewer is immersed in discourse of social change and all of the affective moments that stem from the group's coalition. By the end of the film, the comic frame has worked to inspire and move the audience in ways other frames would fall short in achieving.

In this sense, the comic frame constructs *Pride* as a widely identifiable story. While focusing on the United Kingdom Miners' Strike and locating the narrative in the mid-eighties, *Pride* encourages the viewer to challenge the status quo. On the comic frame's ability to inspire activism, Kimberly Powell writes, "The comic frame challenges the status quo by presenting a corrective ideology which confronts and demeans the failings of the operating ideology. By doing so, attention is focused on the diverse nature of two versions of an ideology and the alternative form points out failings in the present system" (Powell 87). The entire film is constructed in opposition to the Tory government, crafting a compelling narrative of resistance

and the importance of activism in attempting to change social problems. The film's heavy reliance on affect is central to driving this message home.

On the emotional impact of *Pride*, Ann Hornaday, reviewer for *The Washington Post* writes,

*Pride* is a very sweet movie. And a melancholy one, as the risk-taking, compassion and connection depicted begin to be clouded by the looming AIDS crisis. Like *The Normal Heart* earlier this year, *Pride* brings the era to life with fond, atmospheric vividness, from the pulsating joie de vivre of the clubs and dance parties to the shockingly premature elegies to lost friends, lovers, and would-be gifted leaders. *Pride* leaves the viewer in the satisfied throes of all of those emotions: happy and sad, buoyed and chastened, and wondering, finally, what the world might look like if solidarity really could be forever. (Hornaday)

Hornaday weaves together affects elicited by *Pride*. She notes the joyful moments as well as the moments of loss and defeat. She includes references to individual stories of LGSM members such as Ashton and Blake. The use of the word “wondering” is key here. Hornaday writes that the end of the film sparks a feeling of wonder—wonder about how different the world might have been if solidarity had persisted past the timeline of *Pride*. Hornaday's wonder alludes to Burke's theory of maximum consciousness. In the context of a story on social movements, Hornaday writes about the audience being moved by the film. This indicates the potential for action sparked by the poignant story of *Pride*. Burke writes, “In sum, the comic frame should enable people *to be observers of themselves, while acting*. Its ultimate goal would be *maximum consciousness*. One would ‘transcend’ himself by noting his own foibles” (171). Then, if *Pride* adheres to Burke's comic frame, the end goal would be for the audience to reach maximum

consciousness. This “maximum consciousness” is indicated in Hornaday’s review explaining the wonder felt at the end of *Pride* and the potential for the film to incite activism based upon the array of affects felt—from elation to heartbreaking sadness.

Supporting the notion of *Pride* to elicit maximum consciousness in the viewer is the plotline of (fictional) closeted twenty-year-old LGSM member, Joe Cooper, nicknamed “Bromley” in the film due to his place of residency in the suburb located south east of London. The audience is first introduced to Bromley when he arrives at the 1984 London Pride parade, and is immediately thrown into the action as he is recruited to help carry a large banner reading “Queers! Better Blatant than Latent” scrawled across three lines. Bromley states that he doesn’t want to be too visible, indicating that he is still in the closet. At this moment, Ashton arrives to persuade his group of friends to help collect donations for the miners. Bromley is immediately implicated in the collections, and subsequently joins LGSM when it forms later that night. Through the course of the scenes from the 1984 Pride parade, we learn that Bromley is still twenty (one year lower than the legal age of consent for gay men and lesbians in the United Kingdom at the time), lives at home with his parents, and is attending baker’s college. He is not out to his family and frequently has to lie to them regarding his whereabouts.

The audience follows Bromley’s journey of self-discovery and political awakening throughout the course of *Pride*. At the start of the film, Bromley shows no indication that he plans to come out to his family, demonstrated by his frequent lying to his family, telling them he is away at residential baker’s courses instead of in Wales with LGSM. Through specific scenes, we come to realize the family’s negative orientation towards homosexuality. One specific scene shows Bromley’s family gathered around in the living room for the holidays when a public service announcement about HIV/AIDS plays on the television and a family member makes a

homophobic remark. Bromley's mother deems the commercial inappropriate and makes a disapproving glance at the television upon requesting the family member to turn off the television.

Bromley's sexuality is not discovered by his family until a few months later, when his mother and sister uncover dozens of photos Bromley has taken of LGSM over the course of several months. The photographs are hidden in a children's book on his bedroom shelf. Because he is still considered below the age of consent for gay sex, his mother forbids him from leaving, and Bromley is forcibly cut off from all other members of LGSM. The film indicates that he is cut off from LGSM for a couple of months before he hears about the end of the strike on the television. This prompts him to set out for Wales. Upon meeting Siân, who drives him back home, Bromley comes out in a public and theatrical way, turning up with Siân in a van that reads "Lesbians and Gay Men Support the Miners" during his niece's christening.

Bromley's coming out scene is significant for a couple of reasons. First, it documents Bromley's own point of consciousness, in which he breaks apart from his mother's control. Also, in doing this, he is able to further partake in activism without having to surveil himself so that his sexuality remains a secret. This point in the film is rhetorically strategic, happening in the last twenty minutes of the film. Directly after, Bromley rejoins LGSM members and attends the 1985 London Pride parade. The three images below show, in order, Bromley at the 1984 Pride parade pre-coming out, his breaking away from his family, and the ending credits where he is marching with LGSM at the 1985 pride march. A clear distinction is noted before and after he comes out and is able to be an activist without worrying about his family's discovery.



Figures 6, 7 & 8

In figure 6, Bromley is shown at the 1984 London pride parade next to Mike Jackson, one of the founding members of LGSM saying “It... it’s just that I don’t really want to be too visible.” Jackson hands him the banner anyway, and Bromley’s face remains unsure, his body language indicating his discomfort. The next screen capture (Figure 7) is the moment in which he stands up to his mother, and prepares to leave the house during the family’s christening party. He marches into the house with confidence. He parts indicating that he hopes his mother will come around and that they can have a relationship. It is at this moment where the audience first sees Bromley aware of his potential and his importance in the coalition between the miners and LGSM. This is indicated in the moment where Siân James drops him off in front of the family party and tells his mother to appreciate him, “because there is an entire village in Wales what thinks he’s a hero” (*Pride*).

Figure 8 is from the 1985 Pride scene, and is particularly interesting to view in contrast to the first image. Bromley is shown here in the center of the shot behind the first row of marchers. He poses with his hands held high and a look of joy on his face. Bromley’s individual storyline mimics the journey of the film. On the audience’s emotional reaction to the film’s journey, film reviewer Odie Henderson notes,

And yet, inside each of these elements, *Pride* finds a way to surprise and move us. Some of them unfold in a quieter way than one would expect. And we are never completely untethered from the movie’s harsher realities. They are woven in, sometimes at the fringes and sometimes in the center of the action. (Henderson)

Though the above example analyzes one storyline told through *Pride*, Bromley’s narrative experiences its ups and downs in tandem with the larger flow of the story. Outed to his mother around the same time as the low moment in the film when half of the miners of the

Dulais Valley vote to halt LGSM's support, Bromley's story climbs back alongside the larger narrative of the miners' support of lesbians and gay men in the 1985 Pride march. It is the interwoven narratives that aid in making the ending of *Pride* so emotional. This end result is Burke's notion of *maximum consciousness* for the viewer, or what some reviewers have noted as "feeling moved" and wondering about the potential for ongoing solidarity. Feeling moved by the potential for continued solidarity marks an important takeaway from *Pride*—one that orients the film to the present regardless of the historical plotline. The film incites action on behalf of the audience, as shown through analysis of critic and viewer reviews of the film. Bromley's story is essential to the comic frame of *Pride*, and the ability to encourage the audience to reach maximum consciousness alongside this fictive character.

Peter Travers, reviewer for *The Rolling Stone* articulates *Pride*'s relevance to current political struggles. He writes, "Any resemblance between these groundbreakers and the battle for sexual civil rights still being fought today is purely intentional. *Pride* is not subtle about making its points, but sadly these are points that still need to be made" (Travers). In addition, he claims, "*Pride* naively thinks it can change the world with a single movie. Talk about fighting spirit. I couldn't have liked it more" (Travers). While Travers specifically orients the LGBT issues in *Pride* to the present, it is important to note that *Pride* serves to inspire activism across boundaries and encourage coalition building between different groups. In order to do this, *Pride* relies on framing the film through comedy in order to make the events seem *real*. By real, I refer to the fact that the film is a recreation of factual events, though artistic license and adaptation problematize authenticity. However, the viewers perceive the film as authentic due to the emotional charge communicated through framing. It is this that allows Travers to claim that *Pride* attempts to "change the world in a single movie."

### **Authenticity and Affect in Critic Reviews of *Pride***

Throughout reviews of *Pride*, one thing in particular remains static: that *Pride* is a true story. This statement, in some fashion, comes up throughout almost every critic review, and is often stated alongside the extraordinary and unbelievable nature of LGSM and the miners' coalition. *The Washington Post* writes, "*Pride* might easily be accused of over-idealizing its subject matter, if its most heartwarming elements weren't true," (Hornaday) while the *New York Times* published an article titled, "A Cause Unites Unlikely Partners in South Wales" writes, "Contributing to its appeal are that that the story is based on actual, though little-known events" (Holden). *The Rolling Stone* writes, "There is so much 'inspired by a true story' crap churned out in Hollywood that when the genuine article appears, it's a shock. Such a movie is *Pride*, a Brit dramedy that is a crowd-pleaser in the best sense of the word. Even when it's tugging hard at your heartstrings, you believe the damn thing" (Travers). This is followed by a list uncovering the facts in the film, for which there are many. With so many reviewers specifically articulating *Pride's* truth, what is the significance of such a claim to the film's affect and ability to inspire? To answer this question, I look to a range of critic reviews, trace their claims to specific moments in *Pride*, and analyze the emotional response they are discussing.

*Pride* is a feature length film that capitalizes on conventions of classic British comedies. Reviewers note *Pride's* role as a mainstream BBC film, and the impact of the creators' choice to market *Pride's* story in such a way, instead of through other genres such as documentary. Graham Fuller of *The New York Daily News* claims,

*Pride*, the true story of lesbian and gay activists rallying to raise funds for striking Welsh mine workers in 1984-85, could have prompted an earnest documentary.



Instead, Stephen Beresford has written a splashy, semi-embellished crowd-pleaser with more than 80 speaking parts. Broadway veteran Matthew Warchus directs *Pride* as a raucous celebration of discordant groups uniting against oppression.

(Fuller)

Here, Fuller emphasizes the importance of the creators' decision to make *Pride* a comedy drama over a documentary. This is particularly interesting to note, as many of the original members of LGSM were involved in the filmmaking process. Though the main characters are based upon members of the London chapter of LGSM, some degree of authenticity is lost when retelling a historical narrative through the convention of a comedy or drama. However, Fuller notes the film as “splashy” and a “crowd-pleaser,” honing in on the film's more affective qualities that may not have been as emphasized if the story were told through the convention of a documentary film. These affective qualities are made present by *Pride*'s use of the comic frame in order to make the film identifiable and socially relevant though the storyline remains historic.

Fuller also dubs the film “semi-embellished,” paying note to the places where the film lacks authenticity. In her book titled *Authentic<sup>TM</sup>*, Sarah Banet-Weiser writes,

Even if we discard as false a simple opposition between the authentic and the inauthentic, we still must reckon with the power of authenticity—of the self, of experience, of relationships. It is a symbolic construct that, even in a cynical age, continues to have cultural value in how we understand our moral frameworks and ourselves and more generally how we make decisions about how to live our lives.

(5)

Given Banet-Weiser's description of authenticity's power, the reviewers who cite *Pride*'s authenticity in relation to its affect make a claim about the specific ways in which *Pride* is

experienced. Noting the “crowd-pleasing” feel tells how the degree to which *Pride*’s story remains true to historical events and timelines directly influences its cultural meaning and ability to inspire activism. Further, Banet-Weiser writes, “We want to believe—indeed, I argue that we *need* to believe—that there are spaces in our lives driven by genuine affect and emotions, something outside of mere consumer culture” (5). Therefore, the space that *Pride* occupies seems to be driven by *genuine* affect and emotions because of the degree to which the plotline of the film remains true to actual historic events and individuals and is framed in a specific way. This framing allows the audience to follow the story of *Pride* through the ups and downs of the movement in order to achieve *maximum consciousness* at the end. I argue that the comic frame’s drive for consciousness also adds to the film’s perceived authenticity, as the audience embarks on a journey of discovery alongside the characters. The emotional impact of such discovery and its power to incite activism is directly dependent on the viewer’s reception of the film as genuine. The perceived authenticity granted to *Pride* through the film’s framing influences many reviewers to write that they were “moved,” “inspired,” and “overwhelmed” by the emotions in the film.

Other reviewers also made explicit references to *Pride*’s authenticity. Ann Hornaday writes, “Pride keeps its sure-footed balance, never sacrificing authenticity on the alter of sincerity, sweetness and light [*sic*]” (Hornaday). Both reviewers bring up the film’s authenticity, heralding it for remaining true to the historical narrative. Hornaday calls the film sincere and sweet, while Fuller marks it as a little ostentatious yet true. Is the film’s success contingent on its authenticity? It is interesting that though the filmmakers specifically chose to tell *Pride* as a comedy drama, the film is still read through the retelling of factual events. Though the events did take place, and some of the dialogue has been loosely taken from LGSM’s video footage in their

homemade documentary, “All Out! Dancing in Dulais”, the cinematography, dialogue, and chronology are still subject to artistic license. Banet-Weiser states, “in a culture that is increasingly understood and experienced through the logic and strategies of commercial branding, and in a culture characterized by the postmodern styles of irony, parody, and the superficial, the concept of authenticity seems to carry even *more* weight, not less” (10).

Therefore, the reviews crediting authenticity to *Pride’s* widespread support are doing so within the context of the present. In contrast to a culture built upon irony and the superficial, *Pride’s* humor and narrative are read through the lens of authenticity—the film establishes credibility based on how closely it adheres to the historically documented and remembered events.

Authenticity is not only referred to in the context of the historic events. Many critics and viewers also discuss the importance of the characters’ authenticity—the degree to which they accurately portray their real-life inspiration. On Mark Ashton, Hornaday writes, “One of the real-life figures represented in *Pride*—directed with verve, warmth and swiftness by Matthew Warchus from a script by Stephen Beresford—is Mark Ashton (Ben Schnetzer), who hit on the idea of raising money for the striking miners during a gay pride march in London” (Hornaday). Hornaday explicitly notes that Ashton’s character was real, meaning that Schnetzer is acting to portray Ashton as accurately as possible. Mark Simpson, who was a member of the London chapter of LGSM during the strike writes,

*Pride*, though, played me like a violin outside a soup kitchen and had me laughing and blubbing in all the places it wanted me to. And I recognized, in wonder, many of the characters in a way that I really didn’t think I would. It was like meeting old friends again — in the pomp and splendour of their/our youth, complete with those 1950s style haircuts and T-shirts we all had back then. Except that Mark

Ashton was *even more charismatic and attractive and mythical* than Ben Schnetzer's portrayal of him. (Simpson)

This is a clear remark about the devastating loss of so many activists to AIDS, something that is discussed in the previous section on *Pride*'s decision to communicate the characters' fates through text at the film's closure. Simpson contrasts Schnetzer's Ashton with his memory of the "real" Mark Ashton. By doing this, Simpson alludes to the extent to which the portrayal of Ashton was authentic. Simpson discusses in this post his reluctance in seeing *Pride*, both because he was unsure if he wanted to re-experience that moment in time, as well as being unsure if he would like the way LGSM was depicted. Simpson notes his surprise in how much he enjoyed the film and "recognized many of the characters", implying that the actors captured the personas of LGSM members in a way that Simpson recalled. He continues, "Stephen Beresford's script does a near-miraculous job of staying true to the both the spirit of the times, and the leading characters—bringing both alive" (Simpson). Charles Guignon discusses authenticity as "pulling yourself back from your entanglements in social game-playing and going with the flow so that you can get in touch with your real, innermost self. This task requires intensive inward-turning, whether such self-inspection is called 'introspection,' 'self-reflection,' or 'meditation'" (146). If authenticity moves beyond our social selves and the persona we inhabit based upon how we think we are supposed to live, can the characters in *Pride* ever be considered authentic? Principally with the character of Mark Ashton, whose real-life counterpart passed away in 1987, the re-creation of his character is entirely based upon other people's memory of Ashton and video footage, where he was undoubtedly presenting his social self. Therefore, when reviewers discuss the characters as being authentic, what is being articulated is the degree to which the

characters are true to the public and social conception of their persona. Simpson contends that the characters inspired by “real-life” people do fit his memory of their personalities.

In addition, Simpson argues that *Pride*’s weakest moments are those that are fictionalized.

From his experience in LGSM, Simpson confirms that the group did not face nearly as much homophobia from the miners as the film shows. Additionally, the character of Joe “Bromley”, whose story is analyzed above through the comic frame, is fictionalized along with his entire storyline. Simpson writes that the “‘sympathetic’ coming out storyline of ‘Joe’—an invented character—and his stifling middle-class family, all tap into the clichés of ‘the big gay movie’ that we’ve seen too many times before” (Simpson). Here, the film’s authenticity determines the story’s strength and affective impact—its authenticity directly affects the viewer’s ability to achieve *maximum consciousness* by the end of the film. Simpson notes that adding these features to the film make for easy drama, something that hints at the weakness being caused by a lack of truth. In addition, less impactful moments of the film are those that rely on overused clichés which work to take away an authentic feel due to their “cookie cutter” nature and widespread use. Overall, Simpson agrees that the film was true to the actual events and adds that it was both cathartic and nostalgic for him to see. In addition, Matt Smith, reviewer for *Flickering Myth* writes, “It suffers slightly from being a romanticized version of real events, feeling true but characters in this number are always going to be a little stylized” (Smith). Smith’s review was overall positive, but he criticizes the film for overplaying true events and stylizing characters beyond what the individual was like in actuality.

Simpson also notes that inspiration for *Pride* came from Jeff Cole’s 1985 documentary, “All Out! Dancing in Dulais.” Cole was also a member of LGSM, upon whom a minor character in *Pride* is based. One specific example of *Pride* mimicking the scenes depicted in the

documentary occurs during the Pits and Perverts fundraiser scene. Before the event, a journalist interviews Mark Ashton. Ashton appears on the right hand of the screen with fellow LGSM members Gethin and Mike to his left and right. The interviewer's back is to the camera in the foreground on the left-hand side so that we see a partial side profile. The following dialogue occurs between Ashton and the interviewer in *Pride*:

Ashton: And the difference is this is opened to everyone. Okay? Gay, straight, it doesn't matter. We want people to come together to show their support.

Journalist: "And why should gay people like me support the miners?"

Ashton: "Because miners dig for coal, which produces power, which allows gay people like you to dance to Bananarama 'till 3 o'clock in the morning" (*Pride*).

Screenwriter Stephen Beresford gathered inspiration directly from video footage of Ashton being interviewed in "All Out!" On the screen, Ashton is shown on the right hand of the screen in a close range shot. The interviewer's microphone is shown on the left hand side, and the interview is just off screen. Dialogue from the footage states:

Interviewer: "Yeah but a lot of people will say that you know if you're collecting, 'why should we support the miners? because the miners don't support us.' What do you tell people who say that to you?"

Ashton: Well I mean what do you mean when they said the miners don't support us? The miners dig coal, which creates fuel, which actually makes electricity, people, I mean would you go down and mine and work? I wouldn't like to go down and mine and work. One of the reasons I support miners a lot is that they go down in dirt, I wouldn't do it." (Cole)

Shortened and altered to pack a greater punch, this dialogue is inspired by the real-life footage from the strike. Beresford's decision for the screenplay to be heavily influenced by the documented events is important to note, as the story could have also been told based upon entirely fictionalized dialogue. His decision to include lines recorded from LGSM during the strike, as well as collaborate with some members of LGSM gives the accuracy of the film credibility—what the reviewers are noting as authenticity. In addition, altering the dialog communicates the importance of coalition through comedy. In *Pride*, Ashton relies on a campy cliché to make humorous the cultural differences between gay men and the miners. The comic relief of Ashton's words in *Pride* make the dialogue less confrontational while still highlighting the importance of the coalition in fighting oppression. While comedy helps communicate this to the viewer, the clear influence of real life dialogue maintains authenticity despite the added fiction.

What is the impact of *Pride*'s authenticity being emphasized by viewers and critics? If *Pride* is true to real events, it tells a story about our world and history. As mentioned above, its affect is driven by the film's authenticity. This, in addition to the film's ability to orient our feelings toward actual events creates the potential for *Pride* to be relevant to the present. Dave Calhoun, reviewer for *Time Out* writes, "It's the holy grail for filmmakers: to tell a story with something to say about our world that is also shamelessly entertaining, moving and funny" (Calhoun). *Pride*'s ability to move and to comment on our world presently, though through historic narrative, makes it an important vehicle to inspire activism. A reviewer from *Telegraph* states, "'The past is never dead,' wrote William Faulkner: 'it's not even past.' And when you watch Matthew Warchus's *Pride*, a terrifically warm and affecting film set in the bleak midwinter of the Eighties miners' strike, you see our country now." (Collin) In addition, the civil

rights issues taken up by LGSM and the miners in 1984 are still occurring presently. *Pride's* story does not stay within the boundaries of 1984-5, but rather makes a larger comment on the state of world today as well.

*Pride's* relevance to the present is marked throughout the film, but is explicitly clear in the ending take during the 1985 London pride parade. As detailed in the previous section, the ending scene shows LGSM and the miners marching in the front of the parade as they pass parliament. "There is Power in a Union" plays as the camera zooms in on each main character, telling their story beyond the strike's end. The final cut shows the entire front of the parade as a group, focusing on Parliament in the center. The on-screen text reads, "A year after the strike ended, a motion was tabled at the Labour Party Conference to enshrine gay and lesbian rights into the party's manifesto. Although the motion had been raised before, this time it was passed. This was due, in part, to a block vote of total approval from one key union. The National Union of Mineworkers" (*Pride*). The text appears divided up into four sentences, one showing on screen at a time to place focus on each key detail of the characters' lives as well as the resulting legislative decision by the Labour Party that continues to affect the lives of LGBT people in the United Kingdom today. By splitting the text into smaller sentences, the facts are pushed to the forefront to highlight the story's credibility of a true tale.







**Figures 9 & 10**

Marking the point in history when the Labour Party voted to forever support gay and lesbian rights, something that is still in place presently, *LGBT Labour* states,

In the 1980s, with Labour in opposition and the right-wing Thatcher government in power, LCLGR [Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights] concentrated its efforts within the Party to secure policies that supported full equality. At Bournemouth Conference in 1985, LCLGR won a card vote against the NEC and with the support of trade unions. LCLGR also launched Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners which was influential in securing trade union support. LCLGR ensured that the Labour Party policy committed to full equality from this period onwards. (“History”)

Though describing a historic event decided thirty years prior, the viewer receives the information in the context of the present political landscape. Through current LGBT issues, the viewer is left to decipher the degree to which the decision to enshrine gay and lesbian rights into the Labour Party manifesto has had an impact on current LGBT rights policies. Showcasing character narratives, landmarks, and other information that occurred after the story’s cinematic ending is a popular convention in documentaries and historic films. Its wide use in the ending of films

depicting stories that are “true” adds to *Pride*’s perceived authenticity. Connecting the Bournemouth Labour Party decision to enshrine gay and lesbian rights into the party’s manifesto directly to the LGSM and the miner’s coalition provides hard evidence of the coalition’s authenticity based upon results still impacting the United Kingdom. As LGBT Labour claims, LGSM influenced the Labour Party decision to commit to full equality from the 1985 conference onwards.

## Conclusion

Though *Pride* documents a historic narrative, the message extends well beyond the confines of the 1984-5 United Kingdom Miners’ Strike. Its ability to move audiences is contingent upon both its use of Burke’s comic frame as well as the reviewer’s reception of *Pride*’s authenticity as a true story. Framing the film through comedy contributes to its perceived authenticity, which works to elicit affect from the viewer and provide an emotionally-packed ending that causes the audience to physically stand up and cheer, feeling inspired by *Pride*’s story about powerful activism. A.A. Dowd, reviewer for *AV Club* writes,

That much becomes clear by the end, when the movie plays up the positive outcomes of the alliance—including the addition of LGBT equality to the Labour Party’s platform—rather than focus on the strike’s failure. Then again, doing the latter would deflect the positive vibes the filmmakers put out, especially during a genuinely rousing final march set to Welsh protest music. Manipulative but big-hearted, *Pride* is an ode to activism as a social equalizer, and a gushy illustration of the belief that hearts and minds can be changed, and that it’s impossible to truly battle oppression without opposing all forms of oppression. Why resist? (Dowd)

Dowd marks *Pride*'s problematic silencing of the strike's failure while also noting its clear argument for the importance of activism, specifically affect in activism, as well as the importance of coalition building across different groups. Elaborating on this in his review for *Telegraph*, Robbie Collin writes,

In a sense, almost everything has changed since then: 30 years on, the coal is gone, and same-sex marriage has been enshrined in UK law. But the dramatic motor of the film—whether or not these wildly dissimilar groups can draw strength from their differences, and on that basis, impact each other's lives for the better—is the same one driving contemporary Britain. (Collin)

Collin makes explicit links to the driving affect in the film—the impact of two wildly different groups coming together to make a positive impact on each other's lives. Though also ignoring the strike's failure to achieve its goals and improve conditions for the miners, Collin relates the specific story of *Pride* to contemporary Britain, hinting at the film's ability to have a positive impact thirty years on.

Dai Donovan, one of the Dulais Valley miners in *Pride*, talks about the importance of coalition building in his speech during the film's Pits and Perverts scene. He says, "Well it's incredible to see such a mix of people here tonight. Gay and straight. Can you see what we've done here? By coming together, all of us, by pledging our solidarity, our friendship, we've made history." The crowd cheers and he continues, "Back in our—back in our miners' lodge in Wales, we have a banner. And it's old, it's very old. Maybe 100 years. And it's this—two hands together. Joined like this. Well I tell you now, you've worn our badge, "Cole not Dole," and when the time comes, you have my word on this, we will wear yours. Shoulder to shoulder, hand to hand" (*Pride*). Later affirmed that the miners did in turn support lesbians and gay men in the

United Kingdom, Donovan's words are an important ode to the importance of coalition building and solidarity among oppressed groups. This theme is undoubtedly centrally relevant to the current political landscape. Though the film was released in 2014, three years before Brexit and the election of Donald Trump as the 45<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, its message is especially important to the current climate, which I analyze in my concluding chapter. *Pride*, and the story of LGSM and the Dulais Valley Miners' coalition is significant in that it makes a clear argument for productive activism and the importance of affect in coalition building across different groups and communities. Based on the ties to LGSM's activism and its ability to create productive change, this serves as a "successful" example of coalition building, fostering productive activism, breaking down prejudice, and uniting to fight against mutual systems of oppression.

## Conclusion

### **Orienting Affect, Coalition Building & Authenticity Post-Trump Election**

Since I began this project in the spring of 2016 the world has experienced Brexit, in which the United Kingdom voted to secede from the European Union, as well as the election of Donald Trump as the 45<sup>th</sup> President of the United States. In light of these political events, I find my project more relevant than ever. Though I have focused my discussion on the 1984-5 United Kingdom Miners' Strike, I have largely examined the importance of affect in coalition building and the productive activism that can stem from such. In addition, I have placed focus upon the 2014 film, *Pride*, as a retelling of the coalition and current commentary on the importance of social activism. The story's relevance to the present provides a broader statement on the ways in which the political climate has not moved as vastly from that of the mid 1980s as one would have hoped. Though the need for activism has remained constant, there is a renewed urgency for activism now with the election of Donald Trump and the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union. Thus, I am directing my concluding chapter to the importance of social activism and interactional coalition building presently, bringing focus to the ways in which LGSM's coalition is still influencing productive social change more than thirty years after the strike's end. In addition, I analyze three activist groups that take inspiration from LGSM, looking at the ways in which they are partaking in similar radical activism and coalition building as the original LGSM in the 1980s. The groups I focus on are Lesbians and Gays Support the Migrants, Lesbians and Gays Support the Refugees, and Lesbians and Gays Support the Muslims, the last of which functioning as a politically charged slogan rather than an actual activist group.

LGSM continues to engage in coalition building through their Twitter account, which can be found under the Twitter handle @LGSMPrude and was created in December of 2016. This

creation date is worth noting, as the film premiered more than two years prior to the group's social media debut. However, the first few tweets crafted and retweeted by LGSM are inherently political in nature and are focused on the current climate rather than dredging up artifacts from the past. Recently, they have been posting photographs and artifacts from the strike. LGSM's Twitter account is marked genuine by the small light blue check mark next to their name, indicating a stamp of approval and "authenticity" by Twitter. The account tweets about many events of a political nature, but specifically began tweeting about the election of Donald Trump with great frequency in December 2016 and January 2017, going as far as aiding in the organization of a protest on London's Vauxhall Bridge on 20 January 2017. The following screenshot depicts a tweet from a Twitter user, Lucy Keeler, in which she thanks LGSM for organizing the protest, and includes a photograph of the bridge with a banner hanging that reads "Queer Solidarity Smashes Borders." The photograph shows traffic on the bridge from the protest. Though this particular image has only been re-tweeted twenty-one times, LGSM has retweeted many other photographs similar in nature that have accrued hundreds of retweets and responses. Many similar demonstrations occurred on other bridges in the United Kingdom, halting traffic with signs indicating queer solidarity with refugees and immigrants in danger under Donald Trump's presidency and Prime Minister Theresa May's rule post Brexit.



**Figure 11**

Many protesters commented on the solidarity and support exemplified by the demonstration. Sherese, an American Citizen who has recently moved to London states, ““We’re building bridges not walls. It’s important for everyone to support every nation, every person, every heart. I think that’s basically what this protest and what other protests around London are trying to do, is just to support people. Supporting humanity really”” (Segalov). In addition to LGSM’s role in helping organize the demonstration, Lesbians and Gays Support the Migrants was key in organizing.

### **LGSM’s Legacy Through Tribute Groups**

Both Lesbians and Gays Support the Migrants and Lesbians and Gays Support the Refugees have active social media accounts. Lesbians and Gays Support the Refugees operates only on Facebook, while Lesbians and Gays Support the Migrants occupies both Twitter and

Facebook platforms to engage in activism as well as organize demonstrations and rallies. Both groups state specifically that they take inspiration from the original LGSM, and credit *Pride* as the original impetus behind the formation of the groups. On Twitter, Lesbians and Gays Support the Migrants and LGSM's accounts follow each other and engage in public discourse through re-tweeting, amplifying, and tagging each other in messages.

Lesbians and Gays Support the Migrants operates under the Twitter handle @LGSMMigrants, taking inspiration from Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners. Both LGSM-initialed activist groups engage in public online discourse with each other and actively amplify the other's voice through their own means, shown in LGSM's retweet of Lesbians and Gays Support the Migrants below.



Figure 12



Arguably, the formation of groups such as Lesbians and Gays Support the Migrants and Gays and Lesbians Support the Refugees serves as a reimagining of LGSM's coalition that fostered the type of productive activism we would like to continue to see. Evidence of this is based off of their communicative and organizational ties to Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners, such as their joint demonstration at the Vauxhall Bridge, as well as the decision to mimic the group name in their official title. In addition, Lesbians and Gays Support the Refugees has a photo of LGSM during the Miners' Strike as their profile photo on Facebook, serving as an homage to the original LGSM and a clear indication for the inspiration behind the group. Limiting the groups' name to only explicitly include lesbian and gay identities is now outdated, and a more inclusive name would usually be selected. The choice to keep this in the title marks a clear tribute to the original Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners. Perhaps the film's retelling of this one small activist group during the 1984-5 United Kingdom Miners' Strike did have the power to move audiences to fight and strive for social change.

Both groups offer guidelines about who should join their movement. They encourage queer (LGBTQAI) people and those who want to take action to open the UK's borders for migrants and refugees. Lesbians and Gays Support the Migrants make explicit reference to the inspiration for their name, stating,

The name is a deliberate reference to Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners, a group of queer activists in the 80's who formed in support of the striking miners. The work done by the original LGSM in the 80s and this year, following the success of the film *Pride*, is a direct inspiration for setting up this group. Our intention is to use the name as a way to build on this part of our shared history as

queer people extending solidarity and standing with other marginalised people.

(“About”)

The group affirms that they are inclusive of people across all queer identities despite the exclusivity implied by their name. Lesbians and Gays Support the Migrants also notes that the reformed Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners has altered their group to also be LGBTQAI inclusive.

Lesbians and Gays Support the Refugees also clearly state the original LGSM as motivation for the activism they are engaging in. In their “About” section on Facebook they write,

This is a page for LGBTQ+ people who want to support refugees of all kinds. Our name has been chosen as an homage to the historic Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners. If you haven't seen the film *Pride*, you need to; you can also watch a documentary about LGSM here: <https://vimeo.com/22972867>. The name is not intended to be exclusionary -- indeed, all are welcome, including allies -- but to remember an important piece of our history and a time when we came together to help people who were suffering, no matter what their sexual orientation or gender identity “About”.

Lesbians and Gays Support the Refugees cites *Pride* specially as their inspiration, indicating the success of *Pride* to encourage similar types of activism as showcased in the film. I also note Lesbians and Gays Support the Refugees inclusion of the homemade 1985 documentary, “All Out! Dancing in Dulais.” The close comparison between the film and the documentary indicates the perceived authenticity of the film. This is because the group cites both sources as inspiration

for the formation of their group and aligns both sources with the story of Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners.

In addition, Lesbians and Gays Support the Migrants also takes inspiration from the co-founder of Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners, Mark Ashton. On the thirtieth anniversary of Ashton's death Lesbians and Gays Support the Migrants posted a photo of Ashton marching in the mid-eighties. He is wearing a Pits & Perverts t-shirt from LGSM's benefit in London and is holding a pink banner that reads: "Pinko Commie Queers" decorated with the queer triangle (Figure 13). Lesbians and Gays Support the Migrants write, "30 years ago today Mark Ashton passed away. A great inspiration for all of us who are involved in radical queer politics. Solidarity forever, comrade." Lesbians and Gays Support the Migrants explicitly acknowledges being inspired by Ashton's radical queer politics that are so central to the affective coalition building intrinsic to the original LGSM coalition with the Dulais Valley Miners. Making a statement that they are inspired by and strive to follow Ashton's radical activism gestures toward the future of productive radical coalition building and the hope for social change stemming from such discourse and action. Other photos on Lesbians and Gays Support the Migrants' Facebook show members donning Pits & Perverts t-shirts, which are printed and sold online following *Pride's* release. Through this symbolism, Lesbians and Gays Support the Migrants visually aligns themselves with the original LGSM and states their goal for radical queer activism in the same fashion as the coalition between LGSM and the miners.



**Figure 13**

The “About” section on Lesbians and Gays Support the Migrant’s Facebook states that the world is currently experiencing the largest movement of refugees since World War II, with 60 million across the world forcibly displaced. More than 3,000 are dead or missing while trying to cross the Mediterranean and are subject to right-wing backlash upon arrival in Europe. The group also writes that “LGBTQ people in Europe are being pitted against migrants, who we’re told are homophobic and pose a threat to gay rights” (“About”). They continue,

We refuse to allow our sexualities to be used as weapons of border enforcement. As a community with a history of oppression by the UK state and media, we must stand in unqualified solidarity with those migrants currently facing persecution. Lesbians and Gays Support the Migrants is a movement to challenge the racism, xenophobia, islamophobia and homophobia that we see from the media and many politicians. We want to disrupt the prevailing right-wing narrative around migrants through creative discourse intervention, and to provide practical

solidarity and support to self-organised migrant groups. We will be planning mass actions to protest UK border enforcement and fundraising to support migrants.

(“About”)

Lesbian and Gays Support the Migrants outlines their motivations for forming the activist group, adding that the basis of the coalition took after the one portrayed in *Pride*, supporting my argument that the film functioned as an inspiration for activism. Drawing parallels between themselves as queer people reaching out to other marginalized groups, they acknowledge the varying causes for oppression that may differ from the motivation for LGSM’s coalition in the 1980s. Though the motivations for such a group may be different, the need for radical activism is present indeed.

I also find it interesting that the Lesbians and Gays Support the Migrants’ Facebook page notes that migrants are being pitted against queer people, as the media frames refugees as a homophobic population. This too draws a parallel between Lesbians and Gays Support the Migrants and Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners. One of the major opposing arguments from within the lesbian and gay community during the Miners’ Strike was that the miners were a historically homophobic group. Many members of the lesbian and gay community did not want to extend support to a group that had a reputation for harassing queer people. By extending solidarity to the National Union of Mineworkers, LGSM made a statement about the importance of banding together with other marginalized people to fight united against similar oppressions. Once again, queer people are extending support to marginalized populations, and in turn breaking down prejudices and barriers. Though the portrayal of refugees as homophobic is at least in part constructed by the media, the forging of alliance between the groups aids in disputing that notion.

Lesbians and Gays Support the Refugees makes similar claims in their “About” section, stating,

The current Syrian refugee crisis has highlighted refugee issues worldwide. We want to support refugees from places that are in crisis due to war or natural disaster (including climate change). We also want to support LGBTQ+ people who are fleeing persecution and intolerance in countries that are homophobic, biphobic, transphobic.

In practical terms, we hope this group will serve as an umbrella for local LGBTQ+ organizations or individuals who want to do something about the refugee situation. Whether you are organizing by yourself or in concert with an educational or religious organization, a business or community group, you are very welcome here! (“About”)

Lesbians and Gays Support the Refugees statement is slightly different, explicitly offering support of both refugees fleeing from places in crisis as well as LGBTQ+ people who are fleeing persecution and intolerance. This positions Lesbians and Gays Support the Refugees as a group supporting a broad spectrum of identities and issues, rather than a coalition following the similar structure as LGSM. In contrast, Lesbians and Gays Support the Migrants offers support in a similar fashion to the original group. However, both groups make an argument for the importance of LGBTQ people and refugees to band together in the fight against oppressive government.

The third group I focus on is Lesbians and Gays Support the Muslims, which also engages in work to fight against discrimination and oppression, but does not have active social media. Instead, Lesbians and Gays Support the Muslims works more akin to a slogan, depicted on protest signs, in messages circulating on Twitter, and as a way to unite groups of people with

similar activist goals. Followers and users of the slogan Lesbians and Gays Support the Muslims partake in a more creative DIY aesthetic to circulate their message. Below is a screenshot of a tweet by a supporter of Lesbians and Gays Support the Muslims, showing a homemade sign uploaded to circulate between follows on Twitter. The sign reads “Lesbians and Gays (and Queers) Support the Muslims, explicitly stating their inclusivity to all LGBTQ+ identifying people.

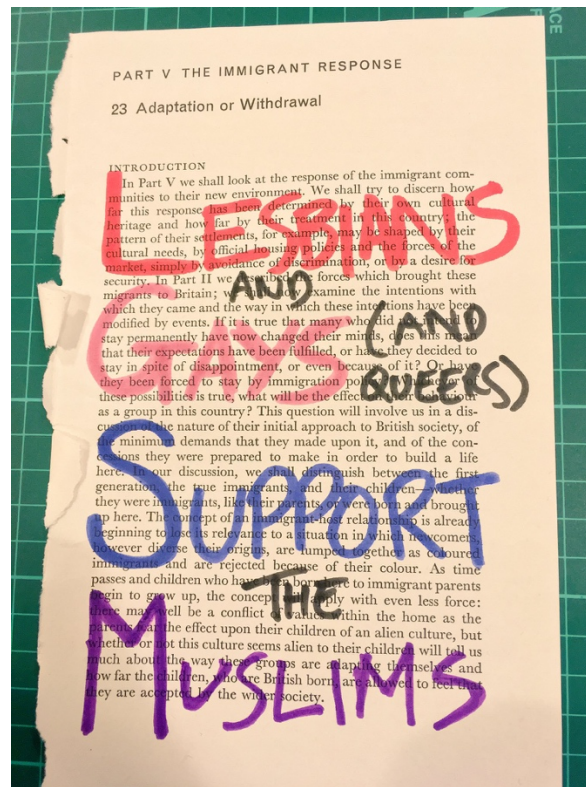


Figure 14

The sign is written over a book page focused on “The Immigrant Response,” making a larger statement about the issues facing refugees and immigrants in the United Kingdom. The almost zine-like DIY aesthetic of the poster shows grassroots organizing and activism in order to unite groups of people in the fight for the same cause.



Lesbians and Gays Support the Muslims is used as a slogan by queer-identifying activists in the United Kingdom specifically. Some members of Lesbians and Gays Support the Muslims are photographed in Figure 15 holding signs referencing the popular Logo (now VH1) television show, RuPaul's Drag Race, adding a campy, comic frame to the serious problem of racial discrimination and oppression, only heightened by the election of Donald Trump and the Brexit vote. The signs reference RuPaul's words at the end of every Drag Race episode, where RuPaul decides which drag queen in the bottom two competitors will advance to the next week and which will be sent home. By adding this queer reference and comic frame, the sign works to make a clear alliance between queer people and refugees living within The United Kingdom and The United States (specifically identified by directly naming U.S. President Donald Trump and U.K. Prime Minister Theresa May).



Figure 15



### **Moving Forward: LGSM-Inspired Groups and their Strive for Change**

The groups Lesbians and Gays Support the Refugees and Lesbians and Gays Support the Migrants, as well as the slogan Lesbians and Gays Support the Muslims also speak to the current climate in the United Kingdom. Post-Brexit, Muslims, refugees, and migrants find themselves in an even more precarious situation than before the Brexit vote, calling for interactional coalition building with the queer community. Although the causes of precarity vary, the queer community is called to build coalitions with the Muslim community and migrants in the United Kingdom in the same fashion that lesbians and gays supported the miners thirty years prior. Formed initially as a response to the mutual oppression and marginalization migrants, Muslims, and LGBTQ people face under the current government and political climate, coalition building has promise to function much like that of LGSM and the Dulais Valley Miners.

In a sense, *Pride* has invigorated a discussion on the need for this type of activism. Although the groups' vulnerability does not emerge from the same circumstances as the miners' vulnerability in the 1980s, combative tactics remain the same. *Pride* helps to imagine what radical coalition building and activism could look like in the present, and makes a vital statement on the importance of marginalized groups banding together in the fight against oppression. Though a historic tale, *Pride* encourages the audience to imagine the potential outcomes if we were to engage in a similar type of activism today. It specifically does this by framing the story through comedy and relying on affect to drive the message home.

I draw these parallels to articulate the potential for *Pride* to inspire the formation of future coalitions like LGSM. The story reimagined through *Pride* provides an example of radical and productive activism emerging from larger social movements. *Pride* offers insight and an alternate lens from which to view the aftermath of the 1984-5 United Kingdom Miners' Strike.

Once again faced with a particularly oppressive government, the dire need for coalition building and social activism heightens. As argued throughout this thesis, affect is central to coalition building, and needs to be examined in social movement rhetoric in order to consider all points and possibilities for social change. The retelling of LGSM's coalition through *Pride* encourages viewers to go out in the world and make change. This is only possible because of the film's perceived authenticity to convince the viewer that similar activism can happen in the future. In a time of an uncertain political climate, we need to band together to fight against systems of harassment. Lesbians and Gays Support the Migrants, Lesbians and Gays Support the Refugees, and Lesbians and Gays Support the Muslims offers just a few examples of a coalition uniting and breaking down barriers in order to fight against discrimination and violence. The activism emerging from such groups offers a glimmer of hope amidst a bleak reality.

The ending of *Pride* details the journeys of characters' lives post 1985. The song "There is power in a Union" plays over the video of the characters marching in the 1985 London pride parade. Unveiling the characters' trajectories provides a gesture into the future—action outside the end of the strike and hope for the coalition's survival beyond the movement's official end. LGSM's ongoing activism as well as the existence of the organizations inspired by LGSM are examples of the ways in which the coalition lives on more than thirty years later. I posit that we need to look to LGSM as a model for the ways in which affect can spark productive activism, and how coalition building can work to unite groups of people across political, social, and cultural boundaries. As the song reminds us at the close of *Pride*, "With our brothers and our sisters from many far off lands. There is power in a union."

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